SOME STUDIES

ABOUT THE

CHERAS OF YORE

THE MADURA TAMIL SANGAM

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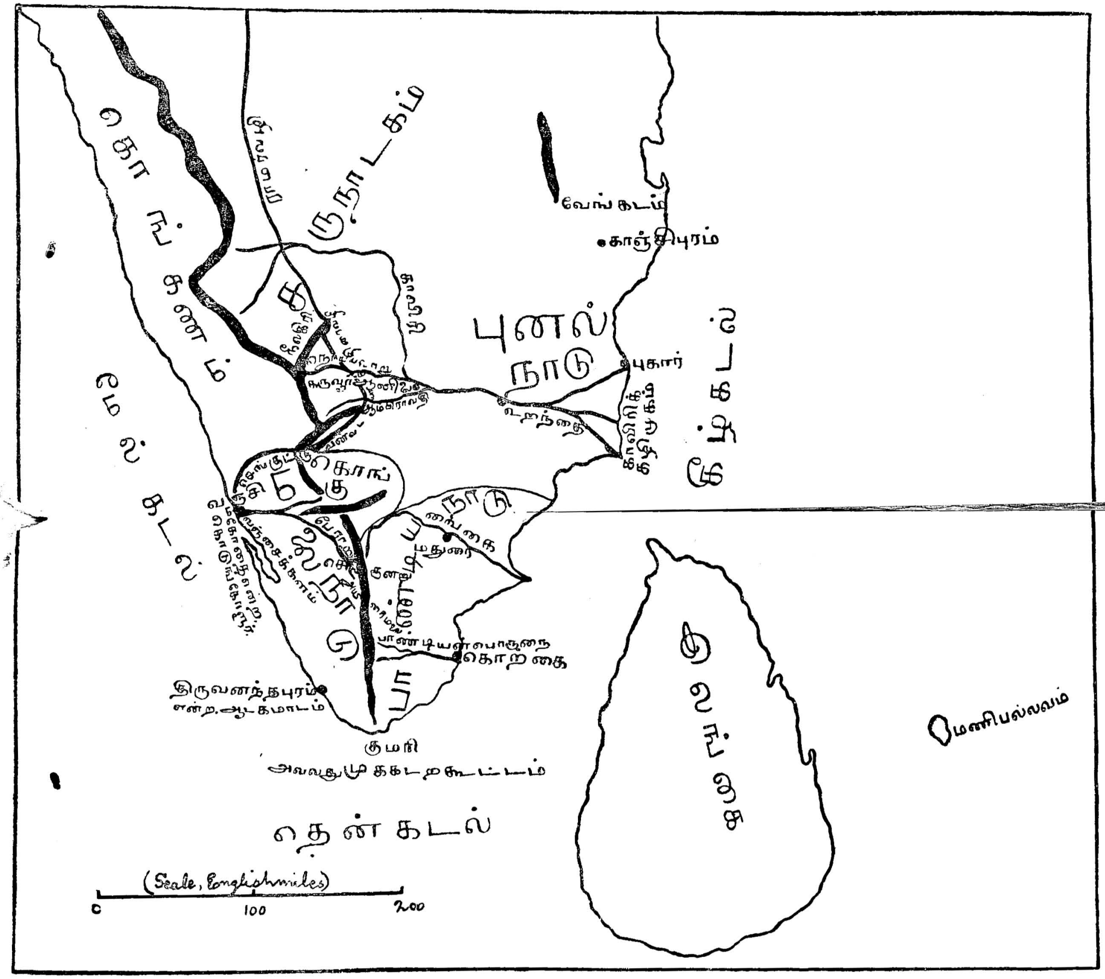
தமிழகம்.



கொங்கணம்
மேல் கடல்
வேங்கடம்
காஞ்சிபுரம்
புனல் நாடு
புகார்
உறந்தை
காவிரி
கீழ் கடல்
மதுரை
கொற்கை
இருவனந்தபுரம்
குமரி
தென் கடல்
இலங்கை
மணிபல்லவம்
(Scale, English miles)
0
100
200

Some Studies about the Cheras of the classic age.

PART I.

The Antiquity of the Cheras.

Section (i) General introductory remarks.

The ruling Chera dynasty appears to be as old as the Tamil civilization, which must date back to at least two or three millenniums before the Christian era. Many Greek and Latin writers from the 4th century B. C. refer to the Cheras as the kings of the west coast of the Tamil country. Both Ptolemy and Strabo, Pliny and the authors of the Periplus, all speak of Musiri as the great west coast port and emporium of the ancient Chera kingdom, and of its brisk seaborne trade with Egypt and the ancient empires in Europe. The teak found in the ruins of Mughier, which only existed not later than 3,000 years B. C. was identified to be of the Chera hills of the west coast (*Vide*, Ragozin's India). Very probably the peacock, the ivory and other articles of merchandise which according to the Hebrew books of kings and chronicles were imported in Solomon's ships came from the Chera coastlands. There are abundant references in the Tamil classics now over 2,000 years old bearing testimony to this time-old maritime trade which the Chera ports carried on with the Yavanas of the distant west.

"..................................சேரலர்
சுள்ளியம் பேரியாற்று வெண்ணுரை கலங்க
யவனர்தந்த வினைமா ணன்கலம்
பொன்னொடுவந்து கறியொடு பெயரும்
வளங் கெழு முசிறி"

(*Vide Aham Stz. 149*).

And we know that Ahananuru is one of the oldest classics in the Tamil Literature. Megasthenes mentions the three great ruling houses of the Ancient Tamilaham of which the Chera dynasty was one. Asokan edicts corroborate this statement of the Yavana (Greek) ambassador in the court of Chandragupta in the 4th century B.C. Almost all the old Tamil poems of the classic age, the last of which is not later than about the first or second century A. D., speak of the Cheras as the crowned monarchs of one of the three oldest Royal Houses that ruled over the whole Tamil-land from time immemorial.

There are some 3,000 poems by about 500 authors besides some classic grammars of times of yore, all collected in over thirty volumes, which are now extant. Ahananuru or Aham 400 and Purananuru or Puram 400 are among the oldest of all these classic poems of prehistoric Sangam age. And in both these very ancient books there are references to these Chera kings of yore. *Vide* :—

(1) "கடந்தடுதானைச் சேரலாதனை
யாங்கன மொத்தியோ வீங்கு செலன் மண்டிலம்"

(Puram 8. Kapilar).

(2) "மாந்தரஞ் சேரலிரும்பொறை யோம்பிய நாடே
புத்தேளுலகத்தற்று"

(Puram 22. Kurunkoliyur Kilar).

(3) "சேரல் செம்பியன் சினங்கெழு திதியன்"

(Aham 36. Madurai Nakkirar).

(4) "சேரலர்
சுள்ளியம் பேரியாற்று"

(Aham 149. Erukkattur Thayankannanar).

One of these thirty volumes, Pathirruppattu or Ten-Tens, exclusively eulogises ten Chera kings in its ten cantos.

The two oldest epics Silappadikaram and Manimekalai also make numerous and copious allusions to the greatness of the Chera monarchs and their kingdom.

The age of these classics known as the Sangam Poems is now well-settled beyond dispute by the works of veteran research-scholars like late Mr. Kanakasabai Pillai and University Research Professors like Dr. S. K. Ayyangar, P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar and Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri to be somewhere between the fifth century B. C. and the 1st or 2nd century A. D. These poems as well as the Grammar 'Tholkappiyam,' which is the oldest book in the Tamil Literature of the pre-christian era, all prove that the Cheras like the Pandyas and the Cholas, were potentates of powerful states, already of such an advanced civilization as to possess and reckon among their regalia all those modern symbols of kingship such as Royal crowns, Imperial flags, and dynastic garlands and signets etc. etc.

(1) " மும்மலையும் முந்நாடும் முந்நதியும் முப்பதியும்
மும்முரசும் முத்தமிழும் முக்கொடியும்—மும்மாவும்
தாமுடைய மன்னர் தடமுடிமேற் றன்றோ
பாமுறைதேர் வள்ளுவர்முப் பால் "

(Tiruvalluvamalai—10).

(2) " புலியொடு வின்னீக்கிப் புகழ்பொறித்த
கிளர் கெண்டை வலியினான் வணக்கிய "

(Mullaikkali Stz. 104).

(3) " வடதிசை மருங்கின் மன்னர்க்கெல்லாம்
தென் தமிழ் நன்னாட்டுச் செழுவில் கயல் புலி
மண்டலை யேற்ற வரைகஈங்கென "

(Silappadikaram, Katchikkadai ll 170-172).

(4) " போந்தை வேம்பே ஆரென வரூஉம்
மாபெருந் தானையர் மலைந்த பூவும் "

(Tholkappiyam, Puratthinai—Sutram 5).

That the whole prehistoric Tamilaham was ruled over only by or was subject to the suzareinty of these three kings is testified to by poems and sutrams in Purananuru and Tholkappiyam.

(1) "மண்டிணி கிடக்கைத் தண்டமிழ்க் கிழவர்
முரசு முழங்குதானை மூவருள்ளும்
அரசெனப்படுவது நினதேபெரும"

(Puram 35. Vellaikkudinaganar.)

(2) "வன்புகழ் மூவர்தண் பொழில் வரைப்பின்
நாற் பெயரெல்லை அகத்தவர் வழங்கும்"

(Thol. Seyyul Iyul--Sutram 391).

Section (ii) Age of the classic poems.

The age of these ancient poems like Purananuru, Ahananuru and Pathirruppattu and of the great grammar Tholkappiyam would thus afford us an idea of the antiquity of the Cheras. It behoves us here therefore to digress a little and investigate the facts which bear upon and which might help us to fix even approximately the great antiquity of these works in the Tamil Literature. Asoka's inscriptions and records of the Yavana (Greek) writers like Megasthenes square with the Tamil traditions about the predeluge Tamilian culture and civilization.

The Ceylon histories like Mahawanso and Dipawanso also tell us that the Magatha Æneas who led the first Aryan colony into Ceylon and founded the Lanka dynasty sought the hand of a Pandya-princess in the 6th century B. C., as worthy to be his 'Dido.' Tholkappiyam and some at least of the poems of Purananuru are undoubtedly older than all the other works. It is a matter of common knowledge that the second stanza of the latter runs as follows :—

" அலங்குளைப் புரவி ஐவரொடு சினைஇ
நிலந்தலைக் கொண்ட பொலம் பூந்தும்பை
ஈரைம் பதின்மரும் பொருது களத் தொழியப்
பெருஞ் சோற்று மிகுபதம் வரையாது கொடுத்தோய் "

This professes to have been addressed by the poet Mudinagaroyar, a member of the first Tamil Academy in praise of his friend and patron Cheraman Perunchorru Uthiyan Cheralathan who lived at the time of the great Kuru-Pandava or Mahabharata war, which, if true, should go as far back as 1,000, B.C. if not even farther. That this tradition about the Chera king feeding the Kaurava armies in the great epic war is no new invention, but was in vogue and believed in even about the early Christian

era is apparent from the following lines of Silappadikaram, which was composed not later than the 2nd century, A. D.

> " ஓரைவ ரீரைம் பதின்மர் உடன்றெழுந்த
> போரிற் பெருஞ்சோறு போற்றாது தானளித்த
> சேரன் பொறையன் மலையன் "
>
> (*Kathai* 29, *p*. 289).

However this may be, there is more cogent reason to presume an age for some at least of the lyrics of Purananuru far earlier than that of all the last Sangam-works now extant.

Let us therefore now briefly review the most salient facts about the age of such of the classic poems as have special or particular references to the Cheras. Of the thirty volumes of these old classics, all research scholars are agreed as to the order of priority to be assigned to them. Puram and Aham 400 are reckoned to be the oldest. Next in point of time are poems like Pathirruppattu and Narrinai. The latest of the classics that relate to the Chera History are Silappadikaram and Manimekalai. The last two are epics, of which Silappadikaram might perhaps have been composed somewhat earlier than Manimekalai. For, while the latter distinctly refers to the destruction of the Chola's maritime metropolis—Kavirippumpattinam—by the sea, the former praises her beauties and wealth and blesses the capital as a still living city. Manimekalai may be of the second century A. D. But Silappadikaram should have been composed about the end of the first or early in the second century A. D. For, its author is no other than the ascetic brother of the great Chera warrior king Chenguttuvan, who ruled and warred all over India in that age. All available

evidences, both in Tamil Literature and Ceylon records, in Sanskrit lores and in the field of archaeology have been reviewed and discussed threadbare; and the unanimous opinion of all unbiassed scholars tend to assign Chenguttuvan's regime to about the first century A. D. Silappadikaram relates many of the important episodes in Chenguttuvan's life and reign in such an intimate manner as to suggest contemporaneity of the author to the royal hero of this superb epic. Therefore this epic must be of the first or early second century A. D.

We know that Chenguttuvan was the hero of the fifth ten of the Ten-Tens or Pathirruppattu, composed by Paranar. That Paranar was a contemporary of Chenguttuvan is proved not only by the epilogue of this fifth canto that definitely mentions that this poet received his rich reward for his eulogiums directly from the king Chenguttuvan, but also by the poems themselves which confirm this truth by the many direct addresses they contain. *Vide* :—

(1) "வசையில் நெடுந்தகை! காண்குவந் திசினே"

(*Pattirruppattu. Stz. 41*).

"O Great king of immaculate fame! I have come to meet you"

(2) "தொலையாக்கற்ப! நின்னிலை கண்டிகுமே"

(*Ibid. Stz. 43*).

"O King of uninterrupted learning! We saw now your peerless position and pomp"

(3) "யாமும் சேறுகம், நீயிரும் வம்மின்
பெருஞ்சினக் குட்டுவற் கண்டனம் வரற்கே"

(*Ibid, Stz. 49*).

" We'll go ourselves; you had better come also to greet the King 'Kuttuvan' of irresistable ire. (against foes).

This King Chenguttuvan succeeded to the royal Chera throne only after the four monarchs respectively eulogised in the first four Tens of this anthology—Pathirruppattu—successively reigned and ruled over the Chera kingdom. As the first ten poems are irretrievably lost, we do not know much of the King Cheral-Athan—the hero of the first of this series of ten cantos known as Ten-Tens. His successor Imayavaramban Nedum-Cheral-Athan sat on the Vanchi throne for fifty-eight years as is expressly mentioned in the epilogue of the second canto which eulogises this monarch. Imayavaramban's junior brother Palyanai-Chelkezhu Kuttuvan wore the Chera crown for twenty-five years as per epilogue of the third canto. And Kalangai Kanni Nar Mudi Cheral, who succeeded these two brothers wielded the Chera sceptre for a quarter of a century—according to the epilogue of the fourth canto of Ten-Tens. And Cheran Chenguttuvan ascended the Vanchi throne only after these four monarchs; and he ruled for over half a century; for, the epilogue to the fifth canto says his reign in Vanchi lasted full fifty-five years. Thus, Imayavaramban's reign over Vanchi must have started full one hundred years before Chenguttuvan ascended the Vanchi throne; and Imayavaramban is only the hero of the second canto. His predecessor Uthiyan Cheral Athan, the hero of the first canto therefore was on the Chera throne hundred and odd years before Chenguttuvan. This will take the second canto of the Ten-Tens obviously to the first century B. C. The author Kumattur Kannanar (குமட்டூர்க் கண்ணனார்) was the poet-contemporary of the King Cheralathan (சேரலாதன்) he eulogises in canto

two. That for these ten poems of canto second of Pathirruppattu (பதிற்றுப்பத்து) the poet was rewarded by the King Cheralathan with the gift of five hundred hamlets is expressly mentioned in the epilogue to the second canto. The direct appeals and apostrophes addressed in these ten verses unmistakably prove the contemporaneity of the poet with the Hero-King. *Vide* :—

(1) " போரடுதானைச் சேரலாத !
....
பலர் புகழ் செல்வமினிது கண்டிகுமே "

(*Pathirruppattu, Stz. 11*).

" O King Cheral Atha !, the head of an army that wins all wars, we have seen your great wealth which is praised by all ".

(2) " ......எதிர்ந்த நின்
பகைவர் நாடும் கண்டு வந்திசினே
....
....சேரலாத !
நீ வாழியரிவ் வுலகத் தோர்க்கென
....
நீ புறந்தருதலின் நோய்தந் தொரீஇய
யாணர் நன்னாடும் கண்டுமதி மருண்டனென் ".

(*Ibid, Stz. 15*).

" I have just traversed the territory of your vanquished foes that dared to resist you; King Cheral Atha ! May you live long for the benefit of the world...........I am also agreeably surprised at the sight of your fertile and prosperous country immune from ills of every kind under the protecting aegis of your sceptre, in glowing contrast with that of your enemies now in ruins ".

(3) அமர் கடந்து மலைந்த தும்பைப் பகைவர்
போர் வீடழித்த செருப்புகல் முன்ப !
கூற்று வெகுண்டு வரினும் ஆற்றும் ஆற்றலையே !
....
....
இலங்குமணி மிடைந்த பொலன் கொள் திகிரிக்
கடலக வரைப்பினிற் பொழில் முழுதாண்டநின்
முன்றிணை முதல்வர் போல நின்றுநீ
கெடாநல்லிசை நிலைஇத்
தவாலியரோ இவ்வுலக மோடுடனே ".

(*Ibid, Stz. 14*).

" O Chivalrous Warrior ! that annihilates all hostile armies ; O Strong man of prowess that defies even the death dealing deity. May you live long, and firmly establish your great fame and name far and wide over the whole land up to its sea-bound limits under your bejewelled golden sceptre just as the many hero forbears of your royal house have done before you ; and may no evil ever touch you or your territory ".

These last few lines just quoted add considerably to the antiquity of the Chera dynasty, for the poets' reference to King Imayavaramban the hero of canto two in this stanza is illuminating in that he is glorified here not as the first empire builder, but only as the scion of a long line of hero-kings who were all rulers of empires. The age of the Ten-Tens may thus range from early in the first century B.C. to about the end of the second century A.D. And as already stated above, Puram and Aham are by far the oldest of all classical poems ; and they are therefore of even a greater antiquity than the two epics and the poem—Pathirruppattu. We shall here investigate one or two facts that will prove this truth.

It is a well established custom with the early Tamil poets to wish their Kings in their songs more days of health and happiness than the sands in the beds of the chief rivers that glide by their capital towns.

For example we have

(1) For Chola

> " சிறக்க நின் ஆயுள்
> மிக்கு வருமின்னீர்க் காவிரி
> எக்கரிட்ட மணலினும் பலவே "

(*Puram, Stz. 43*).

(2) For Chera

> " மண்ணாள் வேந்தே
> நின் வாழ்நாட்கள்
> தண்ணான் பொருநை மணலினும் சிறக்க "

(*Silappathikaram 28. L. 126—128.*)

(3) And when we come to the Pandiya King we find his name coupled with that of the river Pahruli in a similar manner:

> " எங்கோ வாழிய குடுமி தங்கோச்
> செந்நீர்ப் பசும் பொன் வயிரியர்க்கீத்த
> முந்நீர் விழவி நெடியோன்
> நன்னீர்ப் பஃறுளி மணலினும் பலவே "

(புறம் 9.)

When we see these lines stand addressed to a King by a contemporary poet it will be far too gratuitous to presume that he should have requisitioned the name of an imaginary or non-existing river in the case of this Pandiyan King alone, while in respect of the other two Tamil monarchs poets have had recourse only to their

respective living streams. It would be strange to expect this poet to refer to the sands of a lost river rather than to those of the living Vaigai which has been associated by the later classical poets with the names of the Pandiyan monarchs, while his tuneful brethren attached to the other two Tamil Kings made use of the Kaviri and the Porunai for a like purpose. And the irresistible inference is that the stanza from Purananuru was composed by a poet who lived prior to the classic subsidence of the southern Tamil continent, that is to say, while the river Pahruli was still watering the southern Pandiyan provinces since submerged.

That Pahruli, the chief Pandiyan river, was wiped off the Indian map with a vast extent of Tamil territory—is borne testimony to not only by the great commentators but also by the old poets of the Sangam era. We learn from Adiyarkku Nallar who assures us that "கடல் பொருது பின்னொரு காலத்து அவனது (பாண்டியனது) தென்திசைக் கண்ணதாகிய பஃறுளியாற்றுடனே பலவாகிய பக்க மலைகளையுடைய குமரிக் கோட்டையும் கொண்டதனால்" (Silap. P. 265) and again "அவருள் கவியரங்கேறினார் எழுவர் பாண்டியருள் ஒருவன் சயமாகீர்த்தியனாகிய நிலந்தருதிருவிற் பாண்டியன் தொல்காப்பியம் புலப்படுத்து இரீஇயினான். அக்காலத்து அவர் நாட்டுத் தென்பாலி முகத்திற்கு வடவெல்லையாகிய பஃறுளி யென்னும் ஆற்றிற்கும் குமரி யென்னும் ஆற்றிற்கும் இடையே எழுநூற்றுக்காவத வாறும்............இந்த நாற்பத்தொன்பது நாடும் குமரி கொல்லம் முதலிய பன்மலை நாடும் காடும் நதியும் பதியும் தடநீர்க்குமரி வட பெருங் கோட்டின் காறும் கடல் கொண்டொழிதலால்" etc.

(Silap. P. 197—198)

Nacchinarkiniar also tells us "கடலகத்துப்பட்டுக் குமரியாறு பனைநாட்டோடு கெடுவதற்குமுன்"* which receives corroboration from Ilampuranar who urges "கடல்

* Thol. Porul Athikaram, P. 809.

கொள்வதன் முன்பு பிறநாடும் உண்மையின் தெற்கும் எல்லை கூறப் பட்டது" * and from the lines of Nila Kandanar who simply revises and edits Nakirar's gloss upon the Ahapporul that "அக்காலத்துப்போலும் பாண்டியனாட்டைக் கடல் கொண்டது" †. We have it also in the Kalithokai:—

"மலிதிரை யூர்ந்து தன்மண் கடல் வெளவலின்
மெலிவின்றி மேற்சென்று மேவார் நாடிடம் படப்
புலியொடு வின்னீக்கிப் புகழ் பொறித்த கிளர்கெண்டை
வலியினான் வணக்கிய வாடாச்சீர்த் தென்னவன்
றொல்லிசை நட்ட குடியொடு தோன்றிய
நல்லினத்தாயர்"..................‡

To go back to our subject. The author of Silappathikaram also refers to this Tamil tradition of the subsidence of land in the south along with the river Pahruli and says that the submerged land was a Tamil country.

"நெடியோன் குன்றமும் தொடியோள் பெளவமுந்
தமிழ் வரம்பறுத்த தண்புனனாட்டு"

(Kathai VIII, lines 1—2. P. 194.)

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* Thol. Ilampuranar's Eluthathikaram, P. 4.

† Irayanar Agapporul, P. 5.

‡ Mullai Kali Stan, 104, P. 327 [Mr. Kanakasabai Pillai has taken only the portion.

"தென்னவன் றொல்லிசை நட்டகுடியொடு தோன்றிய நல்லினத்தாயர்," and tries to fit it in with his Tibetan hypothesis of the Tamil origin. He argues from this that the Ayar race should have come with the Pandiyans from the North and attempts to draw a connection for these Ayars of the South and the wild Ahirs of the Nothern India. He has quietly slurred over the inconvenient lines that open this stanza; and the reason is not far to seek. They militate against his fond Mongolian theory; for they directly support the Tamil tradition of the subsidence of the land and the advent of these Ayars with their King Pandiya from this submerged Southern land.]

And again,

> " வடி வேலெறிந்த வான்பகைபொறாது
> பஃறுளி யாற்றுடன் பன்மலையடுக்கத்துக்
> குமரிக் கோடுங் கொடுங் கடல் கொள்ள
> வடதிசைக் கங்கையும் இமையமுங் கொண்டு
> தென்றிசை யாண்ட தென்னவன் வாழி "

(Kathai XI, lines 18 to 22. P. 257.)

The gloss of Adiyarkunallar on these lines makes the matter still more clear. He says " அங்ஙனமாகிய நிலக் குறைக்குச் சோழ நாட்டெல்லையிலே முத்தூர்க்கூற்றமும், சேரமா நாட்டுக் குண்டூர்க்கூற்றமும், என்னுமிவற்றை இழந்த நாட்டிற் காக ஆண்ட தென்னவன் " (Silap. P. 265—266). This shows that the tradition embalmed in the Kali Stanza quoted about the Pandiyan encroachment on the Chera and Chola territories after the loss of his southern provinces, was known to and believed in by all Tamil writers since the third Sangam or the Augustan age of Tamil literature. Thus it will be clear that some at least of the lyrics of Purananuru, (like the one quoted, with a direct reference to Pahruli as a living river) should have been composed some time prior to the subsidence of the southern continent, and that some centuries should have again intervened between this subsidence and the 3rd Sangam age for this story of the deluge to have crystallised itself into a tradition in their poems. If the first century of the Christian Era be taken as the latest date of this third Tamil academy at Madura, it will not be far wrong if the earlier songs in Purananuru are assigned to at least the fifth or sixth century B. C.

Section (iii) Age of Tholkappiam.

We have also grounds to believe that Tholkappiam should be equally old, if not even older. Every Tamil student is aware of the unbroken tradition that Tholkappiam is of the first Sangam age, and was one of the standard authorities on grammar for the second and third Tamil Boards. If the tradition were worth anything, this orthodox Tamil grammar should have been in existence long prior to the deluvial catastrophe that swallowed up Kapadapuram, the seat of the second academy.

But as regards Tholkâppiam even some Tamil scholars appear of late to be disposed to question the hoary age which unbroken traditions ascribe to it. Recently in a Madras University publication known as the " The Chronology of the early Tamils," a definite stand is taken by its writer, and the Pro-modernist view is advocated in a highly provocative challenging manner. It is time, in my opinion, that the whole question is reviewed in a dispassionate scientific spirit in the interest of truth: and I propose to prepare the ground for such a final decisive verdict in the world of Letters by an attempted approach to the truth in a twofold manner. Let me first try to test the worth and value of and valid warrant for the modernist arguments advanced in the chronology; and thereafter I shall marshal out and summarise the salient historic and literary evidences which would affirmatively indicate the real truth about this matter. As many problems relating to the history of the Tamil literature depend on the place and position of Tholkappiam in that literature, and are sure to be coloured by one's outlook on this question of the Age of Tholkappiam, its importance warrants an earnest inquiry into its truth. And I shall presently deal with the first part of this inquiry, *viz*., an assessment of the value and

validity of the specific data given in the Chronology to refute Tholkappiam's claims for antiquity.

Dewan Bahadur S. E. Runganadan drew my attention to a review of the Chronology of the Early Tamils in the "Hindu." The reviewer's remarks interested me deeply: particularly the hearty approval he accorded to the conclusions of the learned author of the Chronology regarding the Age of Tholkappiam aroused my curiosity. Directly I secured a copy of the Chronology and read it through with all the attention and care which such an University publication as the Chronology and the startling new theories expounded therein would demand. It struck me that the general remark of the Professor in his review that the book reveals some settled bias is really more warranted than the approval of the reviewer regarding the Age of Tholkappiam. It is obvious that both the author and the reviewer of the Chronology have some instinctive bias against the great antiquity which traditions and Tamil scholarship agree in according to the classical Tamil Vyakarnam. It is my purpose here briefly to canvass the reasons given in Appendix XV of the Chronology to prove that Tholkappiam should be assigned rather to 600 A.D. or a later time than to 600 B.C. or an earlier age. Five particular points are emphasised by the learned author of the Chronology in the Appendix in support of his conclusions. Let me deal with them seriatim.

1. As the "Venkatam" hills are mentioned in the preface or 'Payiram' to Tholkappiam as the northern limit of Tamilakam, and as the name 'Venkatam' itself is not mentioned in any Tamil literary works earlier than that that of 'Kalladanar' of the 7th generation of the

Chronology, the author of the Chronology argues Tholkappiam should be of a later age. For the first time, according to this author, Karikalan II extended the Tamil rule as far as the "Venkatam" hills. If the author's premise is an established fact, there may be some force in his argument. But the very basis for this argument is an unproved and unwarranted assumption, and will be found to be founded on an error in fact. In the first place Tholkappiam makes no reference to "Venkatam" at all; and the "Payiram" which mentions Venkatam is not the work of the author of Tholkappiam. Again it is a cardinal canon for all research workers that no valid argument can be based on mere absence of reference in any books to the points at issue in a discussion. No Sangam poet set himself to write any geographical treatises as such. He need not have mentioned anything on earth unless it had some necessary bearing on or relation to the subjects he was poetising upon. There are innumerable rivers, hills, valleys and villages in the Tamil Nad, that no poet ever referred to; and no one will seriously argue against their existence from the absence of any reference to any of them in the works of the literary writers. Thus the first point for the argument against the antiquity of Tholkappiam is found to be a bubble that stands no pricking.

But this is not all. The very hypothesis for this whole argument is untenable. That the "Venkatam" is not mentioned in any early Sangam work and cannot receive any such mention, because till Karikalan II extended his kingdom in the 6th century for the first time, the "Venkatam" hills lay far far north of the limits of Tamilakam, are statements which are as incorrect as they are unwarranted. The author of the Chronology

has yet to establish this opinion he hazards about Karikalan II being the first warrior that extended his conquests to the foot of the "Venkatam" hills. He only throws out these suggestions as arising out of his surmises from the absence of any earlier references to the Chola conquest of Aruvanadu before Karikalan II. But he knows as well as any Tamil scholar that Aruvanadu was always part and parcel of the Tamil Nad; and as a matter of fact from the early times the Vadugas called the Tamils and their language by the name of this northernmost Tamil province, which bordered the Andhradesa. "Aravars" and "Aravam" are the Vadugu appellations for the Tamils and their language, famously familiarised by the author of "Parani" by his felicitous reference to the cries of the fleeing Vaduga warriors when vanquished by the great Chola general Karunakara Thondaiman in his conquest of "Kalinga."

> "ஒருவரொருவரி னோடமுந்தினர்,
> உடலினிழிவினை யோட அஞ்சினர்
> அபயமபயம் என நடுங்கினர்
> அருவர் அருவரேன இறைஞ்சினர்
>
> (*Parani. Verse. 49*).

The author of the Chronology admits in his book after an elaborate discussion that Purananuru, Agananuru, Narrinai and Kuruntokai (should) form the main basis and supply us with the primary evidence for the early history of the "Tamils", and that "Pathirrupattu and Pattuppattu are by their style and subject matter not far removed from them." Almost all these old classics refer to the "Venkatam" hills, and reinforce the tradition that not only these hills formed the northern bourn of the old Tamilakam, but that they were part of Tamilakam being ruled over by Tamil chieftains under the suzerainty of

the Cholas. Verses 381, 385, 389 and 391of Purananuru will make this fact abundantly clear. "ஒலிவெள்ளருவி வேங்கடநாடன்" (381) "கல்லிழி யருவி வேங்கடங் கிழவோன்" (389). Nothing can give more definite evidence than these references to the Tamilian proprietorship and sovereignty of the Venkatam hills. And "Purananuru" is the oldest extant Tamil classic and Agananuru comes next to that according to the author of the Chronology. Let us therefore see if any and what evidence we may find in the Agananuru collection as regards this unchanging hill boundary of the old Tamilakam. Again verses numbers, 61, 211, 27, 213, 85, and some others as well speak of the "Venkatam" as being in the territory of the Tamil chieftains. "மழபுலம் வணக்கிய மாவண்புல்லி விழவுடை விழுச்சீர் வேங்கடம் பெறினும்" (61). Stanza 14 of "Narrinai" says the same story. In the face of this overwhelming evidence in all the oldest Tamil classics for treating the 'Venkatam' hills as in and of the old Tamil Nad, it is difficult to appreciate the argument of the author of the Chronology against the antiquity of Tholkappiam on the score that the preface or 'Payiram of Panamparanar' affixed to Tholkappiam refers to the "Venkatam" as the northern boundary of Tamilakam.

2. The second point of attack against the antiquity of Tholkappiam is founded on a presumption that the rulers in the Tamil country of the Sangam Age were all petty tribal chiefs, and none of them was a crowned king. Because Tolkappiam refers to the three crowned kings in the Tamilakam, therefore it should be of a very late period when some chieftains had established kingdoms and came to wear crowns also. It may well be that in the pre-historic remotest past, some warrior chiefs may have founded the thrones that acquired renown as the three great kingdoms in the Tamilakam. But what is the

warrant for this author's dictum that in the Age of the now extant Sangam poetry, there was not and could not be any crowned monarch in the whole Tamil Nad. He hazards an opinion that the founder and the first ruler of the Chola dynasty was Veliyan Thithan and he was only a Venman or crownless petty chieftain of Veerai, a coastal town in the estuary of the Kaveri river, or that he and his son ruled their people in the Chola territory without wearing a crown. That Thithan conquered and planted himself in Uranthai has yet to be proved by positive evidence. But even were it true, this would not conclude that there were no crowned kings in Uranthai. On the other hand Thithan himself may have usurped the crown with the throne of Uranthai kingdom. A chieftain may well conquer and establish his dynasty over a kingdom. Far from confirming the suggestion in the Chronicle, the very poets he quotes in this connection lend support to the fact, that Uranthai was not a mere manorial or baronial town, but was the famous capital of the Chola line of kings even at the time of Thithan.

" வென்றி முரசின் விறற்போர்ச் சோழன்
இன்கடுங் கள்ளின் உறந்தை யாங்கண் "

(Agam. 137.).

" வெல்போர்ச் சோழர் அழிசியம் பெருங்காட்டு "

(Narrinai. 87.)

" மறங்கெழு சோழ ருறந்தை யவையத்
தறநின்று நிலையிற்றாதலின் "

(Puram. 39).

There is no specific proof that Venman Veliyan was the lineal ancestor or the prepositus of the Chola house of Karikalan, or even that the Veerai chieftain permanently established his dynasty over the Uranthai throne. The

very rule laid down by the author in his chronology appears to rule out this surmise of his. He says "Three generations is the utmost limit to which a person could be assigned, and that too in very exceptional circumstances only. But beyond it, neither facts of history nor demands of logic would permit us to go." In his chronological tables (1) Veliyan Thithan, the Veerai chieftain, is shown as the prepositus of the Chola dynasty. (2) Thithan Veliyan, his son, is shown as the successor in second generation on the Uranthai throne. (3) Mudithalaikko-Perunarkilli is mentioned as the son and successor of this latter Thithan (No. 2), in the third generation. (4) Velpahradakkai Perunarkilli as succeeding (No. 3) in the fourth generation. (5) Uruvappahrer Ilancetcenni succeeds (No. 4) in the fifth generation. And the poet, Paranar, is assigned in this table to be the eulogist of all except the second Thithan of these five Chola kings of Uranthai in unbroken succession. This offends the above peremptory postulate which the author has himself approvingly emphasised in his book. Paranar could not possibly have adorned the courts of five successive generations of the Uranthai kings besides being in courts of Nedumceralethan, Chenguttuvan and others, as well as a number of Velir chiefs such as Pehan and Neduman Anji. The only acceptable position would be that these several heroes Paranar belauds in his poems should be more or less contemporaries, and are not to be reckoned as successors surviving each other to five generations.

It is perhaps to explain away this patent and fatal objection, it is just insinuated in the Chronology and its schedule that poet Paranar only addressed the Chola kings from the third generation as a contemporary of those kings, while his verses about the earlier Chola rulers in Uranthai were only posthumous eulogiums by

Paranar based on hearsay reports of their exploits. The language and nature of these poems do not afford warrant for any such differentiation. Paranar's verses about Tithan the Ist and Mudithalai-ko, *alias* Karikalan I of the Chronology, and particularly Stanza No. 6 in Aham series could only suggest contemporaneity of the poet with the hero-kings as consistently as those about the later Cholas do. Of course, Puram verses may be addressed to kings directly; whereas the poems of the Aham series by their very nature can only be indirect references to the kings. For, all direct personal references are tabooed in Aham poetry. But tenses, moods and other circumstantial indications in the Aham verses of Paranar about Thithan and his alleged grandson in the schedule to the Chronology, far from militating against the poet's contemporaneity, almost suggest it to such an extent that one may well infer that there were more than one poet by the name of Paranar in the Sangam Age. The real point is that the verses in the name of Paranar cited and relied on for the chronological pedigree do not warrant, and much less prove the author's assumptions. Even if Paranar's references to Tithan of Uranthai and to Mudithalai-ko-Perunarkilli were to be brushed aside as mere posthumous eulogies based on hearsay reports, nevertheless, according to the Chronology the astounding fact still stares us in the face, *viz*., Paranar belauds personally Pahradakai Perunarkilli in the fourth and Ilamchetchenni in the fifth generation in the Chronology, as much as he does in Pattirruppattu the King Cheran Chenguttuvan, whom the author of the Chronology takes to be the grandson of Karikalan, who was son to Ilamchetchenni. This would make Paranar a contemporary of five generations of kings, a longevity out of the range of credibility. On these facts, the theory that all

the five Chola rulers of Uranthai in the first five generations in the chronological table, were uncrowned petty chiefs, and that only Karikalan in the sixth generation for the first time assumed the royal role, fails.

Moreover in the absence of their distinctive dynastic appellations such as Valavan or Killi for the Cholas, Cheliyan or Maran for Pandyas, and Cheral or Vanavan for the Cheras, the adjunct *Ko* is added to the names of kingly rulers to indicate that they are crowned monarchs of these three immemorial Tamil kingdoms, as distinct from mere ruling chiefs and feudatories who go by the names of Vels and Venmans. The names of almost all the rulers of Uranthai are spoken of in the Sangam literature, and even in the table of chronological pedigree under review, either with their respective dynastic titles or with the royal appellation of *Ko*. This fact also would militate against the conjecture that all the Uranthai rulers prior to Karikalan were only Velir chiefs without crowns.

Again, the schedule to the Chronology mentions two Karikalans, the first in the third, and the second in the sixth generation; and in support thereof some verses (Puram 65 and 66) are cited. Obviously these citations reveal that there must be much confusion in the ordering and grouping of kings of the Chola dynasty in the schedule to the Chronology. Puram stanzas 65 and 66 specifically refer to and praise the exploits of Karikalan in the famous battle of "Venni." The poem "Porunar Arrupadai" of Mudathama Kanniyar, cited for Karikalan II in this schedule, narrates just these very exploits in Venni-battle which on the authority of Puram verses 65 and 66 the author of the Chronology attributes to his Karikalan I. It is not suggested that there were two

battles in Venni, and in each the victory went to the Chola king having the same name of Karikala. The Puram verses only give the name of the Venni-victor as Karikalan; but they do not say whose son he was. "Porunar Arrupadai" expressly says that the conqueror of the other two contemporary rival crowned kings at Venni was the son of Uruva Pahrer Ilamchetchenni. The hero of Pattina Palai is neither the son of Ilamchetchenni, nor the victor of Venni battle; he is not even known as Karikalan. His real name is Perumavalavan; and he is the son of Karikalan. (*Vide* Pazhamozhi verse No. 105.) This stanza leaves no doubt as to the respective identities of and relationship between Venni-victor Karikalcholan, and the hero king immortalised in Pattina Palai. Karikalan means "he who had the burnt-foot." Karikalan earned that name because he had his foot burnt in his child-hood. *vide* the following venbas :—

1. முச்சக் கரமு மளப்பதற்கு நீட்டியகால்
இச்சக் கரமே யளந்ததால்— செய்ச்செய்
அரிகான்மேற் றேன்றொடுக்கும் ஆய்புனனீர் நாடன்
கரிகாலன் கானெருப் புற்று
(பத்துப்பாட்டு-பொருநராற்றுப்படை முடிவிலுள்ளது)

2. சுடப்பட் டுயிருந்த சோழன் மகனும்
பிடர்த்தலைப்போரானைப்பெற்றுக்—கடைக்காற்
செயிராறு செங்கோல் செலீஇயினு னில்லை
உயிருடையா ரெய்தா வினை.

(பழமொழி 105)

This Chola king Karikalan's son was kept out of his birthright in his boyhood; and this adventurous Chola scion escaped from his captivity eluding his prisoners, and won back his ancestral Chola crown by his daring military *coup-de-main* with the aid of loyal allies. This

story and happy denouncement, exquisitely eulogised in Pattina-palai, are succintly summerised in this Pazhamozhi venba. In later times, this martial son of Karikalan was confused with his father; and their respective exploits have been indifferently mixed up by indiscriminate writers. That Pattina-palai neither names its hero as Karikalan, nor alludes to any exploits of the famous battles of Venni and Vahai which are exclusive laurels only of Karikalan—the son of Ilamchetchenni, is eloquently significant: Also the incidents of the youthful life of the victor in Venni and Vahai as given in Porunar Arrupadai are irreconcilably at variance with those of the early life of the hero of Pattina-palai. These facts were first noticed by and elaborated in a research thesis of Mahavidwan R. Raghava Iyengar of the Annamalai University: and when he drew my attention to them, I suggested to him the venba from Pazhamozhi as not only confirming his thesis *viz.*, the Pattina-palai hero was different from Karikalan of Venni and Vahai fame, but as also affording further proof of the real relationship between these two great Chola kings as father and son.

There is yet another confusion in the Chronology between Tithan, the Chola king of Uranthai, and a Venman or chieftain of Veerai. All the citations in the Chronology in support of the identity of these different personalities except one verse from Narrinai, make no reference whatever to Veerai or Venman in relation to Tithan of Uranthai. Puram stanzas 6, 122, 352 and 395 all speak simply of "Thithan's Uranthai," without any other adjunct. Even the Aham verse No. 226 refers only to Tithan Veliyan's Uranthai, and gives no warrant to connect this Tithan of Uranthai with any Venmanship of Veerai. All these poems further emphasise that Uranthai

was ever the abiding capital of Tithan under his aegis, and would not admit even remotely any possible hint of his conquest or usurpation of Uranthai. Thithan is the personal name of this Chola king of Uranthai. Velian was one of his titles or surnames suggesting his conquest of "Veliam" a Chera citadel. Aham verse 359 expressly names this place as belonging to the Chera ruler. "வான் வரம்பன் வெளியத்தன்ன" Aham 208 also speaks of this 'Veliam' as being under the Chera Venman general, Aay Yeyinan "வெளியன் வேண்மான் ஆய்எயினன்". And if the Chola king Thithan conquered this Chera citadel 'Veliam,' nothing is more natural than for him to add the title 'Velian,' suggesting his martial victory over the place. Thus, Tithan or Tithan Velian were both one and the same Chola-king that ruled over Uranthai, the time-old Chola metropolis in the classic age. The Narrinai line relied on in the Chronology to identify this Chola king with a petty Velir chief of Veerai seems to read into it a totally different story altogether. The relevant lines of this verse run as follows :—

"..
வீரை வேண்மான் வெளியந்தித்தன்
முரசுமுதற்கொளீஇய மாலை விளக்கின்,
வெண்கோடியம்ப நுண்பனியரும்பக்
கையறவந்த பொழுதொடு......................" (நற்றிணை 58)

The first line is read to mean that it is all one reference to Veerai Venman being or having become the Velian Tithan of Uranthai. That the language of this verse cannot bear this suggestion is patent on its very face. If all the words 'Veerai Venman Veliam Tithan' in this line go to name a single person, then the following lines are left bald and bereft of all meaning. These lines speak of some military exploit as worthy of praise. The plain and

intelligible meaning of the second line here, is and could only be this. "Like unto the vespertine rows of lamps lighted in commemoration of the capture of the Drum, etc., etc., etc." Such a statement would be unmeaning, unless it were completed in sense by mentioning the victor and the vanquished in this connection, *i.e.*, the winner and the loser of the drum, etc., mentioned in this second line here. If the entire first line were taken as referring only to one person, he may be the winner or loser of the drum and other things. The poet would give no information whatever, by leaving his lines so vaguely indefinite as to make no sense out of his lines. The first line therefore must be read to furnish all the particulars necessary to render it in accord with the second line an intelligent and intelligible allusion to some laudable event of military exploit. The words in the first line just appear to answer to this end. Veerai Venman was the chief that perhaps vanquished another Velir chief of Veliam by name 'Tithan.' Veerai and Veliam are two seats of Velir chiefs, situated in the Chola and Chera regions respectively (*Vide* Aham 206 and 208). A Velir chief of Veerai perhaps won a victory over another Velir chief of Veliam, and seized his War-Drum, etc., in the battle. These lines of the Narrinai verse here refer only to this incident. The War-Drum, etc., etc., referred to in the second line, were those of Thithan of Veliyam seized by the Venman of Veerai. Thus read, the Narrinai verse makes cogent sense; and also shows that this Tithan who lost his Drum to the Venman chief of Veerai, a Chola feudatory was a Chera lieutenant in charge of Veliam, and had nothing whatever to do with the Chola king Tithan of Uranthai; who also once conquered Veliam perhaps, and therefore assumed the honorific surname 'Velian' to signify that victory of his.

This seems to be not only more probable in the light of the many verses cited above, but also the only way to reconcile them all into harmony and accord, as well as to give sense and cogent meaning to the Narrinai stanza No. 58 cited in the Chronology.

Even were the whole of the first line in this verse were taken as referring to only one person, it is patent that this (வீரை வேண்மான் வெளியன் தித்தன்) Veerai Venman Veliyan Tithan could never have been the king of Uranthai. The epithet Venman would by itself taboo all controversy as to the status of Tithan referred to in this line. For Venman in Tamil classics would always mean only a feudatory noble or chieftain in contradistinction to a crowned king. No king of any of the three ruling dynasties, Chera, Chola and Pandya would ever be called a Venman for the sheer reason that it would be negativing the kingly status of the person styled a Venman. It would be as preposterous to expect any one of the three kings in the ancient Tamilakam to be styled as Venman as it is to call an anointed king in Europe a Baron or a Count. Vendan, Ko, and Iraivan are the words uniformly used to denote a crowned monarch; whereas a chieftain or petty prince is invariably spoken of only as Venman or Vel in the whole literature of the classic age. * * * In this view the Narrinai verse just quoted would have to be interpreted as follows: " With the dismal evening characterized by Veerai Venman Veliyan Tithan's rows of lighted lamps, sounding-drums and blowing horns, the sharp toothed chill was also commencing its cruel work." There is nothing more however to definitely connect this Veerai Venman Veliyan Tittan of Narrinai verse 58 with the Tithan of Uranthai mentioned in stanzas 6 & 122, or with the Tithan Veliyan of verse

number 152 of Ahananuru. Except that Tithan seems to be common in all these verses, the other names differ in the several references. And what is more significant is that no common incident or act is attributed by these verses to the heroes they respectively eulogise to warrant any definite and positive identity of the persons so eulogised. There is no little of evidence either in these references or elsewhere in the Sangam classics even to suggest that the Tithan of Uranthai must have been the king of Uranthai. That this Tithan, whatever else he was, might be no king at all was conclusively shown above. Any nobleman of repute might be associated with a great city wherein he resides. The mere phrase Tithan of Uranthai or Uranthai of Tittan would by itself be no warrant to hold that the Tithan should also be the king of Uranthai. Kudal or Madura is far famed from time immemorial to be the capital of the Pandyan kings. Poet Kapilar in Puram verse 317 associated the chief—Ahuthai, a patron of letters, with Kudal the Pandian metropolis. The lines of Kapilar run as follows.

> "மணநாறு மார்பின் மறப்போர் அகுதை
> குண்டுநீர் வரைப்பிற் கூடலன்ன"
>
> (*Puram. 347*).

No scholar would venture to infer from these lines that Ahuthai herein referred to was either king or otherwise owner of Madura. All that the poet meant to say here is that Ahuthai was such a distinguished patron of letters and great nobleman that even the royal Pandya capital might be honoured by its being associated with his name. In any event we know for certain that in Kapilar's time Ahuthai was only a Velir Chief, and Madura or Kudal was the seat of contemporary Pandyan kings. If any one thing is clear from this discussion it is this: the Tithan of

Uranthai mentioned by Paranar in his Aham verse 122 is not proved to be the king of Uranthai. Even if he were, there is no reliable and positive proofs that Veerai Venman Veliyan Tithan of the Narrinai verse was that king. On the contrary the very title Venman in the Narrinai verse would negative that contention and prove that that person, whatever else he was, could have been no king at all.

Finally, one would like to be shown some clear authority or definite reference in any Sangam classic before being asked to accept the suggestion that the "Veerai Venman Veliyan Thithan' is to be identified with the Thithan referred to in the line "தித்தனுறந்தை" by Paranar in Agam. 122. The mere fact that an Uranthai ruler's name was Thithan will be no warrant to conclude that he must be the Venman Thithan of Veerai praised by 'Mudukurranar' in Agam. There is not only no evidence for identifying these namesakes; but there is also not the faintest hint in the whole Sangam literature even to suggest that the Veerai chief ever invaded or conquered Uranthai. That very fact that Veerai chieftain is specifically spoken of as Veerai Venman, while this distinctive appellation is dropped in the case of the Uranthai Thithan should preclude any suggestion of identity between them. They are not even spoken of by the same poet. Paranar the earliest poet sings of Uranthai Thithan, while Mudukurranar speaks of Veerai Venman. These two poets have to be reckoned as contemporaries only because the heroes they belaud are assumed to be one and the same person. This is reversing all rules of research. If the identity of their heroes is otherwise established, it may then suggest contemporaneity for the two poets who eulogise that common hero. But when neither the identity of the heroes, nor

the contemporaneity of the eulogising poets is proved, it is unthinkable to build any argument for one from the other of the two unproved and probably unprovable statements.

Thus the whole argument of the Chronologist on this head against the antiquity of Tholkappiam is found to have no feet to stand on. Venman Thithan is not proved to be the first Chola victor of Uranthai ; and even if Veerai Venman were really the conqueror of Uranthai, that in itself cannot prove that there was no crown for the Uranthai rulers in those times.

There is just one more point that calls for consideration in this connection. That Uranthai was a mere Baronial seat of some electorate or petty principality, and not the capital of a kingdom before Karikalan is again an obiter, if not an ipse dixit of the author of the Chronology , and rests on no higher authority than his own surmise. On the contrary all the references in the earliest Sangam poems point to Uranthai as the Chola metropolis (*Vide* Puram stanzas 39, 58, 69, 352, 395), and the Cholanad as one of those three famous kingdoms of yore. (*Vide* Puram stanzas 13, 35, 38, 40, 61, 67, 174, 212, 382).

This writer facetiously concludes that the reference in Tholkappiam to the three Tamil kings (வண்புகழ் மூவர்) itself disproves its antiquity, because he presumes that the general phrase 'three kings' cannot refer particularly to the Tamil kings at a time "when there were seven or eleven kings and a host of them besides on a proper counting." It is difficult to divine what this author really means by this sentence. He cannot mean seriously to argue that passages in poems like "எழுவரும் வீழ"

"சோழர் குடிக்குரியோர் ஒன்பதின்மர்" refer to as many independent kings. Even in later times after the three monarchies were firmly established in Tamilakam according to this writer, eulogists praise the prowess of victors in war as having vanquished five, seven or nine rulers. Here at least these numbers must mean only as many ruling chiefs under the suzerainty real or nominal of one or the other of the three crowned kings of Tamilakam. Not only Tholkappiam ; but even Purananuru (the oldest according to the author of the Chronology) refers to three monarchs almost in language identical with that of Tholkappiam he is here animadverting upon. The parallel passages may here be compared with advantage in this connection.

Tholkappiam.	Purananuru.
வன்புகழ் மூவர் தண்பொழில் வரைப்பின்	மண்டிணிகிடக்கைத் தண்டமிழ்க் கிழவர்
நாற்பெயரெல்லை யகத்தவர் வழங்கும்	முரசு முழங்குதானை மூவருள்ளும்
	அரசெனப்படுவது நினதேபெரும.
(தொல். செய். சூ. 391)	(புறம். 35)

Vide also stanza 367 of Puram to the same effect.

The author of the Chronology takes the second line of his quotation from Tholkappiam "நாற்பெயரெல்லை" as referring to the four mandalams or kingdoms of the later Tamilian history, *i.e*, the ancient Chera, Chola, Pandya and the later formed Thiraya or Thondai. On this assumption he concludes that Tholkappiam must have been composed only after the latest Tondai or Thiraya kingdom came into existence. In support of this argument he seems to rely on statements of Ilampuranar under this Sutram. He writes as follows :—

"The political division to which the third extract refers is not at all applicable to the period of the

synchronistic tables. The commentator rightly expounds that it comprised the four major political provinces of the Tamilakam of Tholkappianar's days, *viz.*, Pandya mandalam, Malai (Chera) mandalam, Cholamandalam and Thondaimandalam. What we have to note in this connection is that the fourfold political division to which Tholkappianar alludes in his Sutrams is the picture of a later Tamilakam which we have no right to project into the times of the dynastic kings appearing in the synchronistic tables. Tholkappiyar's reference must be strictly construed as mirroring the conditions of a much later period in the political history of the Tamils." Perasiriyar's is acknowledged on all hands to be the standard commentary higher in authority than the Ilampuranar's for Cheyyuliyal of Tholkappiam; and Perasiriyar rightly repudiates Ilampuranar's gloss here, and interprets the Sutram in strict and logical conformity with its language which runs as follows :—

> " வண்புகழ் மூவர் தண்பொழில் வரைப்பின் நாற்பெயரெல்லை
> யகத்து "

Perasiriyar's commentary for this is as follows :—

" நாற்பெயரெல்லை யகமென்பது தமிழ்நாடென்றவாறு. வடவேங்கடந் தென்குமரியன்றிக் கிழக்கும் மேற்கும் கடலெல்லை கூறினரோ எனின்—அறியாதுகடாயினாய்; வரையறையிலவென்று கூறாதன வெல்லாங் களைந்து கொள்ளப்படுவன வல்ல; வகை கூறாமையும் தமிழ் கூறப்படுங்கண்டாய்; அவர் வழங்கும் யாப்பின் வழியதென் பது, அந்நாட்டார் வழங்கும் யாப்புப்பகுதி அவை, என்றவாறு."

This is the only meaning that will square with the explicit words in the Sutram. When Tholkappiar expressly says that the entire Tamilakam was ruled by " the only three " monarchs in the whole country, the adjectival phrase " நாற்பெயரெல்லை " can never mean four kingdoms.

For, ex-hypothesi there were only three kingdoms. Besides the word "எல்லை" is unmistakably significant. It can only mean boundary and never a province at all. The Sutram is self-luminous. Tholkappiar here says only that the rules of prosody and poetics, he expounds in this section, strictly conform to the conventions and practices in vogue within the four boundaries of the entire Tamil country under the aegis of the three dynastic monarchs in Tamilakam. The learned author of the Chronology himself says that "one cannot immediately jump to the conclusion that there was a political province under the name Tondaimandalam in those days, for this name itself was brought into vogue at a much later date." After stating as much, he is not fair to himself to stretch the plain and explicit words of Tholkappianar "மூவர் வரைப்பின் நாற்பெயரெல்லை" so as not to refer to their natural import, *viz.*, within the four boundaries of the entire country, belonging to the three Tamil monarchs, but to suggest something else at once unnatural and inconsistent with the language in the Sutram. Ilampuranar's reference is perfectly innocent of its historic implications. Perhaps he meant merely to say that Tholkappianar here referred to the whole Tamil Nad comprising the four provinces known in his times. He never adverted to the chronological sequence at all. He simply stated the only important fact in this connection, *viz.*, Tholkappiyanar here spoke of the practices extant in the entire Tamilakam under the three monarchs. He thought he might best put it by including all the four major provinces or mandalams known to his times to emphasise the entirety. If not, he would be stultifying himself beyond redemption. For, he believed in the great antiquity of Tholkappiam and so could not have said anything to discredit that faith of his. Here the

Chronologist who chooses to torpedo Tholkappiam with an innocently inadvertent reference from Ilampuranar, ignores his express statement that what may be meant was the entire Tamilakam between Venkatam and the Kumari. This explicit statement explains Ilampuranar's intention: and his innocently inadvertent word cannot subvert the import of the expressly definite words in the Sutram. It is unnecessary to labour this point at any further length. It is clear that there is absolutely nothing in the Sutrams cited in this connection that is not in perfect harmony with the traditional antiquity of Tholkappiam.

3. The third objection to the great antiquity of Tholkappiam is founded on some Sutrams found in Marapiyal which purport to sanction and accentuate the privileges of caste by birth. The convincing answer to this objection is what appears on the very face of these fugitive Sutrams. Their contents as well as their context bear unimpeachable testimony to their fabrication and foisting at some later period. The 15 Sutrams which purport to speak of the four castes and their birthrights are sandwiched between Sutrams 69 and 86 in Marapiyal. This highly incongruous and inappropriate situation is self-suggestive. Tholkappiam scrupulously follows the most perfectly scientific method and system of treatment throughout. But in this instance, if these Sutrams were genuine, Tholkappiar must be deemed guilty of a strange and inexcusable lapse. For, all the Sutrams up to 69 speak of conventions regarding animal life, and all from 85th and after refer to the vegetable kingdom. What is the appropriateness in wedging between them these 15 Sutrams about the places and privileges of the four castes of men based on birth? These might well have preceded the Sutrams relating to the beasts, or followed those

dealing with the plants. In fact, if ever Tholkappiyanar intended to incorporate these in his great grammar, he could have placed them immediately after Sutram No. 33 which refers to mankind as standing at the top of the scale of all living things. That Sutram comes in the regular course of climax in gamut of life.

Again, if there were four castes in Tamilakam in Tholkappiyanar's times, surely they should have been referred to with other classifications of the Tamil people detailed in the Agattinaiyiyal and Purattainaiyiyal. None but the Brahmans are there spoken of, and they are treated as of a different race and culture. But the Tamil people are always mentioned only in their regional or vocational divisions. Not a single reference to Kshatriyas, to Vaisyas or even to Vellalas as a caste appears anywhere in Tholkappiam except in this ramshackle context in Marapiyal. The names Kshatriya and Sudra are carefully left over in these 15 Sutrams. This scrupulous avoidence of the word "Sudra", the name of the fourth caste of the Aryan social system is eloquently significant. Vellalas in Tamilakam were a respected sect in the post-Tholkappiyam age. They formed the highest rank among the Tamil people. The interpolators, whoever they may be, of these 15 Sutrams, dared not speak of any Tamil class as the ignoble Sudras. They therefore slyly referred to the fourth class as "Vellalas". As this was a respected name, the Tamils would raise no serious protest at the time. Another difficulty also was smoothed over by the authors of these interpolated Sutrams. The fourth caste among the Aryans formed the servile class. But the Vellalas in Tamilakam were of the proudest rank. So, in stating the pursuits and vocations of the four Varnas in these 15 Sutrams, their author takes care to confuse them between the last two—Vanigars and

Vellalas. The fact of the matter is that in the Tamil country at no time were any such castes as Vaisyas or Kshatriyas. The Arasars are actual rulers, and the Brahmans claim to be of non-Tamil Aryan extraction. Tholkappiyam repeatedly proclaims that it deals exclusively with the actual conditions of the Tamils alone as were in vogue in the Tamilakam of that age or epoch. And if ever any Aryan institution or usage is referred to for parallel illustration, the Sutram says as much, and never leaves it in doubt as to whether it was Aryan or Tamil. In the face of these facts, these 15 fugitive Sutrams can only be spurious interpolations by some later writers to make it appear that this oldest classical grammar gives sanction and countenance to the four Varnas of the Aryan sociology in Tamilakam. It is thus clear that these 15 Sutrams, on whose incongruity the Chronologist hangs an objection to the antiquity of Tholkappiyam, are irrelevant interpolations of a later date. The very fact that Tholkappiyam does not refer to any existence of the four Varnas or castes by birth among the Tamils in the Agam and Puram chapters, is a proof that it was composed at a very early epoch in the history of Tamil Literature when the caste-system was unknown and unfamiliar to the Tamil society.

Moreover, it is clear that these Sutrams in the "Marapiyal", assigning pursuits and privileges to the four castes, do not offer any irreconcilable opposition to the antiquity of Tholkappiyam even if they were genuine. The four-fold cast-system is a very old institution in the Brahman or Vedic or Aryan culture. The four classes mentioned in these Sutrams really existed—though not by birth,—and exercised their useful function in the social economy of the Tamils as much in the pre-Purananuru as in the post-Purananuru times. Vellalas or

agriculturists, Vanigars or traders, Arasars or rulers, and Andanars or priestly Brahmans were all well-known social units in the Tamilakam of yore. The author of the Chronology himself admits that "the few Aryans who first came into the Tamil country were of the religious order. There was a small sprinkling of secular Brahmans also (in the Tamil country of the Purananuru age) who pursued some handicraft work or other." Tholkappiyam does frequently refer to both these sections. It speaks of the higher order of the priestly Brahmans as "Andanars", and of the secular Brahmans as "Parpars". The very fact that the rulers and noblemen in Tamilakam invited these priestly Brahmans to perform Yagams for them and heaped honours and estates on them, as is admitted in the several verses in the old Puram or Aham collections, proves that these religious and social notions of the Aryans were not only known, but were not even averse to the Tamils of the Puram and Aham epochs. To aspire for the benefits of Yagams and to actually resort to their costly performances—a fact observed not only on the part of the Tamil monarchs, but also among noblemen in the country—would reveal not a mere acquaintance with, but also a considerable assimilation of the Aryan practices and culture by the Tamils in the times of the Puram and Aham verses to which the Chronology assigns the oldest age. This in its turn should indicate that Brahmans must have lived long enough in Tamilakam from prior to this classic age to familiarise and persuade the civilised Tamils to acquiesce in and partially adopt these Aryan notions. Books like Purananuru and Ahananuru, Padirruppattu and Pattupattu, which the Chronology assigns to an earlier pre-Tholkappiam era, all of them bear testimony to the performance of Yagam by the rulers and citizens

in Tamilakam; whereas Tholkappiyam has not a single reference to the practice of Yagam by any non-Brahman Tamil. In this view Tholkappiyam should imply, if anything, an earlier age when the Tamils might have been merely hospitable witnesses to the practices of the Brahman settlers in their midst, quietly observing and good-naturedly not objecting to these Aryans having their own ways which were not the ways of the Tamils in those days. And as the extant Sangam literature familiarly refers to the performance of Yagams as a common practise among the Tamil rulers and the rich and aspiring nobles in Tamilakam, it should bespeak of a much later post-Tholkappiam age. It may well be that Tholkappiam in these Marapiyal Sutrams is just drawing a parallel from the Aryan culture to the four classes of people in Tamilakam without any implication whatever that the Aryan Varnas existed in the Tamil country. This tendency to draw comparisons with the parallel Aryan practices and precepts is quite a common feature in Tholkappiyam. The reference to the Gandharva union as a close parallel to "Kalavu" practice of the Tamils in Kalaviyal, and the mention of the Brahmanic Siksha rules and standards of phonetic measures and sound sources of the alphabetic letters in contrast to those of the Tamil grammar in Pirappiyal are instances in point. These will only point to a fair acquaintance with the Aryan culture and learning on the part of the Tamil scholars and nothing more. This contact and acquaintance of the Tamils with the Aryans is just discernible in Tholkappiyam; but it is the Sangam poetry, for which the Chronology fondly claims pristine purity and priority, that breathes not a mere acquaintance with, but also a considerable assimilation and adoption of Aryan notions and practices by the Tamil people of that age,

and thus affords unimpeachable internal evidence of that poems being later and post-Tholkappiyam works. The Sutram cited for the third objection is simply permissive. It only says that to rule over lands is not taboo to the Andanars or spiritually evolved Brahmans. It does not even speak of Brahmans in the Tamilakam being rulers. This may be a mere reference to the parallel social standard in the Aryan system to show the position and privileges of the Brahmans in that system to which there need not have been any bar in Tamilakam also.

4. The fourth objection to the antiquity of Tholkappiyam is based on Sutram 5, Agattinai iyal. This Sutram need not frighten or distress any Tamilian at all. The same explanations which harmonise the Marapiyal Sutrams discussed above in dealing with objection No. (3) will reconcile this Sutram as well with the early age of Tholkappiyam. The author of the Chronology has no real objection to any reference to the gods mentioned in this Sutram. For, he admits that all the collections of his own choice contain verses relating to most of these deities. His only objection is to the regional distribution of these deities in Tholkappiyam and particularly to the position assigned to "Varuna" in this Sutram. If once the gods were admitted to be familiar deities in the old Tamilakam, there can be no objection to their correlation with the regional topography. Muruga, Mayon, Indra, and Varuna are the favourites or Adi-devatas in the hills, pasture lands, urban and maritime areas respectively as much in the Aryavartha as in the Tamilakam. This Sutram, if anything would be even a more unexceptionable parallel reference than those in the Pirappiyal and Kalaviyal of Tholkappiyam. The point as to whether these four were

ancient Aryan gods domiciled in Tamilakam, or were indigenous Dravidian deities incorporated in the Aryan pantheon is yet an open question. The recent theses of Western scholars suggest that even Vishnu and Varuna and Indra are of Dravidian origin. We need not go so far to harmonise this Sutram with its great age in Tamil literary history. There is nothing on record in the works admitted to the claim of antiquity in the Chronology to militate against Tholkappiar's reference in this connection; but there is everything to support the reference to these deities in this Sutram in Tholkappiyam. Verses in the Agam and Puram collections, Pattupattu and other Tamil poems do refer to one and all of these deities, and always in special reference to their favourite regional locations. Tholkappiyam simply reflects the myths and the faith current in Tamilakam.

5. The final and fifth shaft in the Chronology is the familiar old stock-in trade argument founded on the word (ஓரை) Orai in Tholkappiyam. The late lamented and learned Mr. Swamikannu Pillay almost canonized this fetish. But no one tackled this gorgon scare-crow seriously so far. We generally accept the argument as axiomatic truth; and naturally on that footing we find no answer to this objection. The whole history of this argument is a fine instance of the power of auto-suggestive self-stultifying hypnotism. We are often over-powered by mere sound similarity; and we then flounder helplessly in irretrievable errors. What is the proved philological connection between the Greek 'Hora' and the Tamil 'Orai' (ஓரை). So far as I know no one has given any convincing answer to this obvious elementary question. Until this connection is first conclusively established, it is idle to speculate on the origin or the fancied

kinship of this Tamil word. It is unprofitable and even dangerous to enter upon endless and hair-splitting controversies.

In the first place it is said by competent Greek savants that the original import of "Hora" in Greek had nothing to do with the divisions of a day's time at all; only in its later and secondary stage this Greek word was adopted to mean a part of a day. In Sanskrit there is no word corresponding to this Tamil word (ஓரை) in sense as well as sound. "Ahorathram" in Sanskrit can have no connection whatever to "Orai" in Tamil. Were it necessary to dogmatise a foreign origin to this word "Orai" in Tamil, it may as well have come directly into Tamilakam from Greece, and need not require a Sanskrit transporting agency for its transmission. For, it is a well-known fact of history that there was direct intercourse between Tamilakam and the Grecian and Roman countries from pre-historic times. But why this superstition that the Tamils could have had no indigenous culture of any kind, and every Tamil word for even elementary notions of time and space divisions should be of foreign origin? To argue that borrowing was always the lot of Tamil, and to lend words and notions is ever the monopoly of the Aryan dialects is the order of the day. Dr. Caldwell has pricked this bubble decades ago and has laid the ghost to rest, it is to be hoped. Even the proud Sanskrit is now proved not to have disdained loans and even gifts from Tamil. "Orai" may well be an indigenous Tamil word from the beginning of time. As Sanskrit has no word to correspond to the Tamil "Orai" in sense and sound, it is all the more reason why it should be a pure Tamil word. Kizhamai (கிழமை) Nal (நாள்) Thingal (திங்கள்) Andu (ஆண்டு) are all pure Tamil

words, and there is no insuperable impediment in believing that "Orai" (ஓரை) also may be of Tamil origin. The contention is that the Tamils could not have evolved for themselves any advanced astronomical knowledge and should therefore have only borrowed the words with the notions of astronomical science. Even if this extraordinary and perverse proposition were conceded for argument's sake, it need not entail the foreign origin of the word (ஓரை). For it involves no advanced or technical astronomical notion whatever. If "Orai" meant merely some part of a day's time set apart as suitable for certain rites and rituals, this requires no great astronomical attainments for anyone to entertain this idea, or to frame a word to express it. "Orai" may thus be a Tamil word; and the endless speculation about its origin will have no solution; for, it needs none at all.

Secondly, apart from all this, this meaning of "Orai" in the Tholkappiyam is not conclusively established. It is a fundamental canon that the meaning of a word must be first ascertained definitely before any controversy is raised about its origin. The Sutram reads as follows:

"மறைந்த வொழுக்கத் தோரையும் நாளும்
துறந்த வொழுக்கம் கிழவோற்கில்லை"

(தொல். களவி. 44)

It is the commentators of the modern age that first interpreted the word "Orai" here as meaning a muhurtham or auspicious part of a day. There is nothing in the whole of Tholkappiyam to hold that this word is employed only in this astronomical or astrological sense

here in this Sutram. The Sutram proceeds to emphasise only this simple truth *viz.*, while men may not forsake all other attractions and diverse distractions even in their love, women unlike men would crave for nothing but their love. Neither the nature and normal functions of the day, nor the fondest amusements and sports would distract women from their all-absorbing love. The plain meaning of this Sutram is that men in love do not forsake all other attractions of the day as well as their wonted sports and plays. The implication is that women in love do so, because love to them is their very existence, while to men love is merely a thing of joy. The language of the Sutram is plain as a pike staff. The word "Orai", meaning pastime or play is as old as the Tamil literature. At first it simply signified sport or play in common. But as after childhood and youth, men ordinarily cease to interest themselves in amusements as civilization advances while women ever revel in them throughout their life, the word "Orai" by selective principle came to be applied in later times to the pastimes and amusements of women-folk. Tholkappiyam in the earliest unsophisticated Tamilian era uses this word to express sports or plays, which men in their amphibious, attenuated and moderated love do not give up even for their love. The later day commentator who came nearly fifteen hundred years after this classic grammar, imported into this Sutram the astrological meaning of this word. While the original text gives no countenance to this view and while it admits of a fairly uncontroversial meaning, it will be doing violence first to give a new import and then to build a load of argument against the age of the book itself all based on unproved one-sided assumption. It is an instance of giving the dog a bad name to hang him.

CONCLUSION.

Thus we have now some positive evidences which prove that Purananuru and Tholkappiam go back at least to five hundred B. C. if not, even farther down. And these books of yore all refer to the Royal house of the Cheras as already a hoary pre-historic dynasty in Tamilaham. The great antiquity of the Chera dynasty is thus found to be proved as much by references in irrefutable foreign records as also by unchallengeable proofs from the Tamil classics of yore. It goes back to as remote a past as at least 1,000 B. C.

PART II.

The Chera Kingdom and its Capital City.

Section (i) Different theories.

There has been a controversy among scholars as regards the identity of the ancient Chera Dominion and of Vanchi their royal capital. This dispute is relatively of recent origin, and is the result of remarks and conjectures of some research scholars of repute in reference to the identity and topography of the famous old metropolitan city of the early Cheras. Mr. Kanakasabai Pillai in his Essays known as "The Tamils 1,800 years ago" suggested that Karur, the present petty inland place on the river Periyar near the hills was the old Vanchi. He held this opinion on some plausible reasons. The famous old Chera capital stood on the Periyar River. That was also known as 'Karuvur'. Mr. Pillai was persuaded by the facts that the present inland village Karur is on the river Periyar; and that it is in the Cheranad. He thought perhaps the name 'Karur' is only a contracted form of 'Karuvur' another name for 'Vanchi'. But both traditions and facts dispute his view and effectively disprove it. There is no shred of evidence to prove this village was in existence for over 2,000 years or to conclude that its name Karur had anything whatever to do with the classic 'Karuvur', and much less with 'Vanchi' the more frequently used name of the old Chera capital. The people in and about this village Karur have no legend, no recollection of any traditions to connect it with the far-famed ancient city of the Cheras. More than all this, that it is inland far away from the sea is fatal to Mr. Kanakasabai Pillai's conjecture. The ancient Vanchi was a port and a mari-

time city at the mouth of the river Periyar as will be presently shown.

There is another theory suggesting the identity of the modern town Karur in the Trichinopoly District with the ancient Karuvur or Vanchi of the Cheras of the classic age. This view was first suggested by Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar of the Tamil Lexicon Office of the Madras University and was supported by some other scholars since. This lacks even the one advantage which Mr. Kanakasabai Pillai found in support of his view, in the fact that the Kerala village of Karur at least stands on the river Periyar. But Karur in the Trichinopoly District has no river near it at all; and what is much worse, it is not even in the intervening border state of Kongu, but is in the Eastern Cholanad, over 300 miles east of the Western Ghats. Ordinarily for these reasons alone such a theory should have received no further notice, and would have been summarily rejected but for the position and connection of its protagonists. Learned and polemical dissertations and discussive disquisitions of Pandits with an extravagant display of erudition have taken research scholarship by storm and have only served to make confusion worse confounded, particularly among students of history whose complacent contempt for the classics is only matched by their colossal ignorance of them which really caused that contempt. Scholars who make historical research are notoriously out of touch with the Tamil classics. They not only fight shy of the old Tamil classics; they proudly blind themselves to all light available from the old poems, holding as a postulate that all poetry must be spurious history. This is a superstition which has cost Indian History very dearly. Ancient classical Tamil poetry is in my opinion as staunch an ally of true history as archæology and for

inquiries into the remotest past untouched and unapproachable by archæology, is often the only available resource and reliable guide. Rich rewards surely await inquirers who would tap these hitherto unexplored and almost inexhaustible mines and repositories of old histories. Our enquiries about the Cheras of the classic age only start from the dawn of history in about the 1st and 2nd centuries A. D. and grope back into the dark recesses of the more distant and remoter past. There is no sunny light of history, nor any moonbeams of Archæology to dispel the perpetual night that palls and shrouds those regions. The steady stars of the ancient poems scintillate in these transpolar realms. But they would suffice to guide our faltering steps, if only we learn to familiarise our mind's eyes to these stars. People used only to the dazzling lamps of the saloons may of course find the still dark night on the outskirts of the city very appalling and the twinkling stars in the sky serving in their case only to make the bleak impenetrable darkness visible. But the shepherds accustomed to the starry heavens would count his sheep unerringly with that light. Moreover the very frozen fields of ice of these classics of olden times serve to preserve facts of prehistoric periods, amazingly well. They do not fester or decompose under the torrid and malignant rays of warring passions and jarring jealousies ambitious attractions and destructive animosities of the races of later times. At least for the enquiries about the Cheras of the classic age, I found the Tamil classics not merely helpful, but also abundantly rich to yield a good harvest to every sickleman. And I shall endeavour to briefly review the results of my studies of the Tamil classics bearing upon the controversy as regards the homelands and capital city of the Cheras of yore,

Section (ii) The Cheranad or dominions of the ancient Chera Kings.

Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar says "the old Cheranad comprised the modern districts of Salem and Coimbatore in the eastern plains as well as Malabar and Cochin in the plateau between the Western ghats and the Arabian Sea...... They covered five out of the twelve old provinces of Tamilakam, *viz*., Kuttam, Kudam, Karka, Poozhi and Maladu........The area occupied by the Salem and Coimbatore Districts was from yore known always as Kongunad. And it is the possession of this Kongunad by immemorial right that earned the Chera kings one of their titles, *viz*., Kongan or Kongar ko (Lord of Kongu)". [*Vide* Chap. 12, p. 155, 2nd edition of "Cheran Chenguttuvan"]. That Salem and Coimbatore always formed the Kongunad is an unchallengable fact of history as much as of the Tamil Literature. Whether this Kongunad was always a territory or province of the Chera kingdom is the question at issue still unsettled among the research scholars. The hero of the Pandit's book is the famous Chera warrior King Chenguttuvan. King Kalangai kanni Narmudicheral the hero of the 4th canto of Pathirruppattu was only Chenguttuvan's step-brother according to the Pandit, though I hold they were cousins of the first degree. King Palyanai Chelkuzhu Kuttuvan—the hero of the 3rd canto of Pathirruppattu was the uncle of both these cousins. If Kongunad belonged to and formed part of the Chera kingdom as of yore and by dynastic right, it should be strange indeed for these Chera kings to seek laurels by severally invading and conquering this Kongunad; and much less for laying it waste by pillage and plunder. And yet we learn from the Tamil classics of

this age that every one of these great old Chera kings not only led military expeditions into the Kongunad, but also plumed themselves with the proud title of Conqueror or Vanquisher of Kongunad. I shall give here a few quotations which conclusively establish this fact.

(1) " மா கெழு கொங்கர் நாடகப்படுத்த

வேல் கெழுதானை வெருவருதோன்றல் "

(Pathirruppattu, Stz. 22).

" O ! Dreaded king, commander of the armies that conquered the territories of the great lords of Kongu ".

(2) King Chenguttuvan himself is said to have fought a great battle in a bloody field of Kongars and vanquished them and their allied armies with the Chola and Pandya flags.

" நும் போல் வேந்தர் நும் மோடிகலிக்

கொங்கர் செங்களத்துக் கொடுவரிக்கயற்கொடி

பகைப்புறத்துத் தந்தனராயினும் ஆங்கவை

திசைமுக வேழத்தின் செவியகம்புக்கன "

(Chilappadikaram, Chap. 25, Katchi Kathai, ll. 152—155).

(3) Again King Ilam cheral Irumporai is praised for his victory over the Kongars by the poet Perumkunrur Kizhar.

" விரவுப்பணை முழங்கு நிரைதோல் வரைப்பின்

உரவுக்களிற்று வெல்கொடி நுடங்கும் பாசறை

யாரெயிறலைத்த கல்கால் கவணை

நாரறி நறவிற் கொங்கர்கோவே "

(Pathirruppattu, Stz. 88).

These several invasions and expeditionary campaigns of the successive Chera kings into the Kongunad prove that far from being a hereditary province of the Chera kingdom, Kongunad was always an independent state or principality and that Kongars or the rulers of Kongunad were often vanquished but never subdued by any of the martial monarchs wearing the Chera crown. There are also references in the classics to prove that suzerainty was claimed over this Kongunad often by the Pandya Kings and less frequently by the Cholas as well. For, this fertile region touched on her borders all these three kingdoms. Yet for all this Kongunad ever remained a separate state under her own rulers, often courted by one or the other of the three crowned kings as allies in their battles against their rival monarchs. This fact is also confirmed by positive references in the classic poems to the chiefs and ruling princes of Kongunad as contemporaries of great Chera monarchs. Chenguttuvan is admittedly the greatest of the early Chera kings; he had a consuming passion for martial glory, for he was incessantly fighting with all his contemporaries far and near. Not satisfied with his victories over all the neighbouring kings and rulers in South India, he led an expedition even against the north Aryan chiefs as far as the Himalayan mountains.

> "வடதிசை எல்லை இமயமாக
> தென்னங்குமரி யொடாயிடை யரச
> சொல்பல நாட்டைத் தொல்கவினழி
> போரடுதானைப் பொலந்தார்க் குட்டுவன்
>
> (*Pathirruppatu*, Stz. 43.)

And the rich and invitingly fertile Kongu lay temptingly close on the eastern border of his powerful kingdom. Yet he deemed the rulers of Kongu to be

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great and independent enough to be invited to his court along with such independent foreign potentates as the Malawa monarch and the Ceylon king, Gayavahu. That the Kongu Princes were held to be of equal rank with these kings and were also the honoured guests of Chenguttuvan in the festive occasion when he dedicated a temple to Kannaki is mentioned by that king's royal brother, Ilango himself in his great masterpiece—the superb epic of Chilappadikaram. (*Vide*) :—

> “ உலகமன்னவன் நின்றோன் முன்னர்
> அருஞ்சிறை நீங்கிய ஆரிய மன்னரும்
> பெருஞ்சிறைக் கோட்டம் பிரிந்த மன்னரும்
> குடகக் கொங்கருமாளுவ வேந்தரும்
> கடல் சூழிலங்கைக் கயவாகுவேந்தனும்
> “ எந்நாட் டாங்கணிமைய வரம்பனின்
> நன்னாட் செய்த நாளணி வேள்வியில்
> வந்தீகெ ”ன்றே வணங்கினர் வேண்டத்
> தந்தேன் வரமென்றெழுந்த தொருகுரல்.”

(*Chilappadikaram, 30-Varantharukathai, ll. 156-169*).

That Kongu was always an independent buffer state lying between the western Cheras and the eastern Cholas is also proved by the following references in Periapuranam, composed by Sekkilar—the poet minister of the Cholas in their palmiest days. He says that the king Cheramanperumal had to cross and recross the intervening independent Kongunad in possession of her own valourous martial sons when the Chera king visited his saintly friend Sundarar in Tiruvarur in the Cholanad and when after his visit he returned to his own hereditory home of the hills—the Malainad of the Cheras.

"அந்நாட் டெல்லைகடந்தணைய அமைச்சர்க்கெல்லாம் விடையருளி

....

கொன்னார் அயில்வேல் மறவர்பயில் கோங்கர் நாடுகடந்தருளிப்
பொன்னாட்டவரும் அணைந்தாடும் பொன்னிநீர் நாட்டிடைப்
போவார்."

(*Peria Puranam, Stz. 50 of Seraman Perumal Nayanar Puranam*).

Again says Sekkilar :

"கொங்குநாடு கடந்துபோய் குலவுமலைநாட் டெல்லையுற"

(*Ibid, Stz. 141*).

This is again reiterated in stanzas 4,14,22,27,28 and 32 of Vellaiyanai Charukkam of Periapuranam. Pandit Raghava Iyengar attempts to get round these unchallengably conclusive references by suggesting that the Cheras of these times perhaps lost all their territories including Kongunad east of the Ghats and retreated to their Malainad province west of the Western Ghats and that Sekkilar spoke only of this shrunken Chera kingdom, which in the age of the classics, according to the Pandit, extended to and included the Kongu region. But this ingeneous sophistry is also negatived by Poet Kovur Kizhar in his old poem which is in Purananuru the oldest of the classical sangam poetry. This poem eulogises the Chola king, Killi Valavan, who invaded the Chera kingdom, and laid seige to the old Chera capital Vanchi in their Malainad. As the Germans violated the neutrality of Belgium in their invasion of France, this Chola king at the head of his forces traversed the buffer state of Kongu violating its neutrality and vanquishing its resistance on his way to the ancient mountain Chera kingdoms always known as Malainad (the mountain country) and Kudapulam (western region.)

" மைந்தராடிய மயங்குபெருந்தானைக்
கொங்குபுறம் பெற்ற கொற்றவேந்தே!
....
வேந்து புறங் கொடுத்த வீந்து புகுபறந்தலை
மாட மயங்கெரிமண்டிக் கோடிறு
புருமெறி மலையி னிருநிலஞ் சேரச்
சென்றோன் மன்ற............................
....
வஞ்சி முற்றம் வயக்களனாக
அஞ்சாமற வாராட் போரழித்துக்
கொண்டனை பெரும குடபுலத்ததரி "

(*Puram Stz. 373*).

This Killi Valavan was a cousin or nephew of Cheran chenguttuvan, who, the Pandit says in his biography of this hero king, ruled over Kongu regions as the principal province of his Chera kingdom and whose capital city of Vanchi lay in the eastern extremity of this Kongu territory almost where it touches the pulse of Cholanad. The poet Kovur Kizhar's reference just cited is a direct personal address to his contemporary Chola king, Killivalavan. This poet was also a contemporary of poet Paranar. For both these bards took part in effecting a reconciliation between their patron chief Pehan and his wife Kannaki by their persuasive metrical addresses (*Vide* Stzs. 144, 145 of Paranar and Stz. 147 of Kovur Kizhar in Purananuru).

If as suggested by the Pandit, the city of Vanchi was in the age of Chenguttuvan and his successors in the eastern extremity of Kongunad near modern Trichinopoly, the Chola king Killivalavan could not have traversed all the Kongu region and crossed the ghats to lay seige

to Vanchi in the Kudapulam. Kovur Kizhar's poem leaves not a shadow of doubt that Killivalavan had to traverse Kongunad, and to reach the "wide mountain country surrounded by high hills whose tops are often split by the thunderbolts of the rainclouds", before he staggered and shocked the Kudapulam or Chera kingdom by beseiging Vanchi, the royal capital of that ancient kingdom. This ancient poet's description of the route of this ambitious Chola invader, the definite reference to the Chera kingdom as Kudapulam in the midst of high cliffed mountains of the Ghats, and to the situation of the Chera capital Vanchi in that region beseiged by the hostile Chola king in this stanza in Purananuru are all as lucid and unmistakable as positive and definite in their significance. There is no escape from the irresistable conclusion they lead to *viz.*, that the Chera kingdom of yore did not extend to or include Kongunad, but that it only comprised the picturesque and fertile valleys in the lap of the cloud-tipped hills of the Western Ghats and hence ever known as 'Malainad' and 'Kudapulam'.

The Sangam poet, Sathanar, in his epic poem known as Manimekalai expressly says that Malainadu properly so called was solely the family or dynastic dominion of the great western Chera King Chenguttuvan.

> " செங்குட்டுவன் எனுஞ் செங்கோல் வேந்தன்
> பூத்தவஞ்சி பூவாவஞ்சியிற்
> போர்த் தொழிற்றானை குஞ்சியிற் புனைய
> நில நாடெல்லை தன் மலைநாடென்ன
> செம் பொன் வாகையும் சேர்த்திய சேரன் "

Pandit Raghava Iyengar and scholars of his school freely admit that 'Malainadu' comprises only the west

coast valleys between the Ghats and the sea and that Kongunad which they believe to have also formed part of the old Chera kingdom, was never known as nor included in Malainad, but was a separate and extensive territory east of the Ghats now covered by the Salem and Coimbatore Districts. (*Vide* Chap. 2 page 155 and 156 of 'Cheran Chenguttuvan'). And all the Sangam poets uniformly refer only to the maritime Malainad in the west coast as the Chera dominion, and Kongunad east of the Ghats remained throughout the age of the Sangam Classics outside the Cheras' sphere and under its own rulers virtually independent of the Cheras The Chera kingdom of yore therefore was ever the Malainad of the west coast and its normal limits did not extend east of the Ghats.

Some arguments based upon the names found in certain inscriptions in Karur temple are advanced in support of the suggestion that Kongunad might have been the main part of the Cheramandalam in times of yore "Keratanthaka Valanadu" and 'Chola Keralamandalam' are some names mentioned in these inscriptions to describe the country surrounding Karur. From these names it is argued that these tracts should once have belonged to the Kerala or Chera Kings. 'Keralantaka' means "he who deals death to the Keralas". Obviously this name can only suggest that some one who owned this territory was so hostile to the Cheras as to be proud of being reckoned as their mortal enemy. That is exactly the real truth and origin of this name for this part of country which is on the eastern border of Kongunad. The territory called Keralandaka Valanadu in these inscriptions in Karur temple extend from Uranthai to Karur. Uranthai, the celebrated ancient capital of the Cholas of the classic times, is now the eastern suburb

of the modern municipal town of Trichinopoly. No student worthy of his books would suggest that Uranthai was ever under Chera rule. Yet this land came to be christened Keralanthaka Valanad. The reason is this : The Chola King Raja Rajan reigned and ruled over the Cholanad in the tenth century A. D. He was a warrior king proud of parading his conquests. Among the many pompous titles he assumed, the heraldic epithet or appellation of Keralantaka is one. His proclamations make this fact perfectly clear. He delighted to call himself the monarch of the Cheras, his rival rulers in Kudapulam or west coast. The Tamil name Chera was sanskritized into Kerala. Hence Raja Rajan's martial pride blazoned his heraldics with this new title of Keralandakar. In the same vein Rajaraja gave himself another title Pandya Kulasani pompously to suggest that he was the thunderbolt to the rival royal house of the Pandyas in the south. 'Asani' means a bolt from the blue. And any title which a monarch is fond of is easily passed to some country or city by his people to please him. This Chola king Raja Rajan reigned in Tanjore in the 10th and 11th centuries A. D. A strip of land around Tanjore was called the Pandyakulasani Valanadu to commemorate the new title fondly assumed by the king. Yet no one would venture to infer that this territory round Tanjore must ever have been under the sway of the Pandyan kings, because it came to be known as Pandyakulasani Valanadu. Similarly the pompous new title Keralantaka assumed by Raja Rajan in the 10th century A. D. baptized this part of his kingdom from Uraiyur to Karur by this proud new appellation of his. And the later inscriptions in Karur temple naturally referred to this part of the Cholanad by the new name given to it in and after Raja Raja's time.

Its other name "Chola Keralamandalam" also is of similar origin. Raja Raja's successor Kulottunga III reigned in the 12th century A. D. One of the new heraldic titles he assumed was 'Cholakeralan' to signify that he was by his military exploits the lord of both the Chola and Kerala or Chera countries. This would indicate only the vanity of Kulottunga III. Neither was he, nor any other Chola king ever the ruler of Kerala country any more than any Chera king could claim to have ruled over any part of the Chola kingdom at any time. Because Kulottunga III called himself "Chola kerala" this area round Karur which was part of his (Cholas) kingdom came also to be called 'Cholakerala mandalam' to perpetuate the new title of this Chola king. These names given to this part of the Chola country in the 11th and 12th centuries A. D. to commemorate vainglorious titles of the Chola kings cannot warrant any inference as to the early history of the Cheras or their relation to this region in the Cholanad. There is thus nothing to disturb the truth, established by the Tamil classics and the foreign records of ancient European travellers, *viz.*, the early Cheras held sway from time immemorial in their Malainad or Home of Hills in the rich and beautiful valleys between the Western Ghats and the Arabian sea.

Section (iii). The ancient capital city of the Chera Kings.

I shall now try to marshal up the available evidences from the early Tamil classics to locate and identify the site of Vanchi, the ancient capital of the Cheras in the classic period. Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar of the Madras University Tamil Lexicon Office, and his cousin Mahavidwan K. Raghava Iyengar of Ramnad, now a Lecturer in the Tamil Research section in the Annamalai University maintain that the modern Karur near Trichinopoly was the Cheras' Vanchi of yore. Their main arguments in support of their thesis are these—(1) Karur is near a stream now known as Aamravathy: and the Cheras' Vanchi is described in the old classical poems as lying on the great Periyar river also known as Aan porunai: and the Chera river Aan porunai must be identified with this rivulet Aamravathy a tributary of the River Kaviri in the Cholanad. (2) The ancient poems don't refer to Vanchi as a seaport and some poems refer to Vanchi by its other name Karuvur; therefore the old Vanchi must be the inland Karur near Trichinopoly. (3) Old Vanchi was also called Karuvur by some Sangam poets; and the modern Karur is christened as Vanchularanyam by the anonymous author of Karur Thala Puranam, a book of fables recently composed to sanctify this modern town.

Those who maintain that the Modern Karur was the old Vanchi would feel the ground under their feet slipping away, when Kongu regions or any country near Karur and east of the Ghats is proved as has been proved in the previous section, never to have formed part of the ancient Chera kingdom. For, Karur is in the western extremity

of the Cholanad, near the border of Kongunad and over 300 miles east of the Western Ghats. The time-old capital of the Cheras' Malainad which ended with the Ghats could not be 300 miles away from the kingdom, and what is worse, in the heart of a foreign country ruled by rival Chola kings and hostile Kongu chiefs. That is why they endeavour to prove that the old Kongunad and even a part of the Cholanad where the modern Karur is situate was part of the Chera kingdom. This thesis of theirs has just been shown to be untenable. And it will be presently seen that Karur is not even in the Kongu territory, but is a town in the western border of Cholanad, which has sprung into importance only in the medieval times from about the 7th century A. D. This Karur was either non-existant, or of such insignificance in those early times as to be entirely unknown to the old classics.

In the first place, the author of Chenguttuvan's prose biography was himself constrained to admit that this Karur not only lies in the Cholanad, but even became the Chola capital in the 10th century A. D.

"பிற்காலத்திற் சோழரது ஆதிக்கம் பெருகியபோது, கருவூர் சோணாட்டின் முக்கிய நகரங்களுள் ஒன்றானசெய்தி சாஸனங்களாலும் நூல்களாலும் தெரிகின்றது."

(*P. 131, Cheran Chenguttuvan 1915 edition*).

It is thus conceded that Karur was one of the principal capital cities of the Chola kings in the Cholanad in the 10th century, A. D. Only the Pandit adds a gloss of his own by way of warily qualifying this admission. He says this Chola connection for Karur started in later time (பிற்காலத்தில்). If it were the Chera capital at any time when and how the Cholas got it from the Cheras could not even be suggested by these scholars. On the

contrary Poet Sekkilar, who was himself the Chief-Minister of King Anapaya Chola having access to the Chola Court records and the archives composed his great master-piece—Periapuranam early in the 12th century A. D., in Stanza 2 of the canto called Eripatta Nayanar Puranam in this book says that this Karur or "Karuvur was a time-old great Chola City and belonged hereditarily to the royal ancestors of king Anapayan from time immemorial in their own right.

" மன்னிய அநபாயன் சீர் மரபின் மாநகரமாகும்
தொன்னெடுங் கருவூர் என்னும் சுடர்மணிவீதி மூதூர் "

Speaking of king Pukazh Cholan an earlier ancestor of his master, Anapaya Cholan Sekkilar says again that this "Peerless city of Karuvur was the proud possession of the kings of the Chola dynasty."

" அங்கணினிதுறையுநாள் அரசிறைஞ்ச வீற்றிருந்து
கொங்கரொடு குடபுலத்துக் கோமன்னர் திறைகொணரத்
தங்கள் குலமரபின் முதற்றனிநகராங் கருவூரில்
மங்கலநாள ரசுரிமைச் சுற்றமுடன் வந்தணைந்தார்."

(*Pukazh Chola Nayanar Puranam, Stz. 11*).

What is worse for the Pandits and their school of scholars is that the very anonymous Karur-Thala-Puranam which they so much rely on in proof of their fond theory that this Karur was the old Chera capital Vanchi gives their case away in this connection. In reciting the story of Eripathar this Thalapuranam speaks of Karur in terms so identical with the words of Sekkilar in his canto about the same Saiva Saint in his Periapuranam as it looks probable that the former simply confirms if not repeats Sekkilar's sentiments regarding the immemorial hereditory Chola connection with this town.

முடிசூடரச ருணங்குமணி முன்றிலுடையாருலவியசீர்

குடுசூழ்கொங்கர் குடபுலத்தார் கொணருந்திறை கண்டிடல் வேண்டி

படிசூழனிகம் அமைச்சர் பரிசனமொய்கொளத் தம்பழம்பதியாம்

கடிசூழ்வாவிக் கருவூரினை அணைந்தார் முரசங்கலந்தார்ப்ப.

(*Karuvur Puranam*, *Eripatta Sarukkam Stz. 5*)

It is thus clear that all Tamil poets from Sekkilar to the author of Karur puranam now for over a thousand years have uniformly held that this Karur always was only a Chola town in the Cholanad and belonged hereditarily only to the Chola kings. If this Karur was a Chera capital before, and came to the Cholas by conquest as is suggested by the Pandits, nothing would be more natural and tempting to the poets than to recite or refer to such an achievement redounding to the glory of their Chola heroes especially when they had to make mention of this place in their panegyrics of Chola kings. It is unthinkable and most strange that all of them should ignore this glorious exploit of the Cholas and complacently speak of it purely as an ancient hereditary possession of the Chola House. All the inscriptions in and around Karur invariably and uniformly speak of Karur only as a Chola town. The ascertained history of the times also negative the naive suggestion of the Pandits in this connection. The Pandits insinuate that the Cheras were the original owners of this Karur upto the 5th century A. D. and lost it to the Cholas only when the latter became more powerful and aggressive and drove the former beyond the Ghats, between the 3rd and 10th century A.D. (*Vide* Chap. 10 and 13 of the 1st edition, 12 and 13 of the 2nd edition of Cheran Chenguttuvan). All the established facts and proved inscriptions on the other hand only prove that the Cholas were weak and insignificant and were repeatedly

and frequently defeated and dwarfed by the Cheras and Pandyas during this very period, and that the Cholas rose to importance only from the time of Raja Rajan in the latter half of the 10th century A. D. Chilappadikaram and Pathirruppattu relate numerous conquests and victories of the Chera kings over the Cholas. King Chenguttuvan crushed all the nine princes and rulers of the Chola dynasty and gave the attenuated remnant of the Chola territory to his nephew and nominee Killivalavan.

" சோழர் குடிக்குரியோர் ஒன்பதின்மர்வீழ "

(Pathikam to 5th canto of Pathirruppattu)

" நின்மைத்துனவளவன் கிள்ளியொடு பொருந்தா
ஒத்தபண்பினர் ஒன்பது மன்னர்
இளவரசுபொருஉர் ஏவல் கேளார்
வளநாடழிக்கு மாண்பினராதலின்
ஒன்பது குடையுமொரு பகலழித்தவன்."

(Chilappadikaram Neerpadaikathai ll. 118-122)

Again Chenguttuvan's successor Peruncheral Irumporai of Thagadur fame also vanquished the Chola and the allied Pandya kings and won many a victory that reduced the Cholas to great straits and utter humiliation. His exploits are sung by poet Arisilkizhar in unequivocal terms :—

" காவிரிமண்டிய சேய்விரிவனப்பில்
புகார்ச்செல்வ! பூழியர் மெய்ம்மறை!"

(Pathirruppattu Stz. 73).

His heir and successor Ilamcheral Irumporai also routed the Chola king of his times with all his allies and gave the conquered Chola regions to fire and sword.

"இருபெருவேந்தரும் விச்சியும் வீழ
அருமிளை கல்லகத்தைந் தெயிலெறிந்து
பொத்தியாண்ட பெருஞ்சோழனையும்
வித்தையாண்ட இளம்பழையன்மாறனையும்
வைத்த வெஞ்சினம் வாய்ப்ப வென்று
வஞ்சி மூதூர்த்தந்து பிறர்க்குதவி."

(*Pathirruppattu Pathikam to Canto 9*).

From the 5th to the 9th century A. D. the Pallavas were rising in power and prestige. They gradually but effectively encroached upon and established their sway over large and extensive territories of the Cholas reducing Cholanad to almost a petty principality and the Cholas to ignoble ease and contented oblivion. The classic city of Conjeevaram and all Chola regions down to Tanjore came under the Pallava flag. Saiva saints Thiru Navukkarasar and Gnana Sambandar in the 7th and Sundarar in the 8th century A. D. refer to the powerful Pallava rulers and their dominance over a wide area of what was Cholanad before. The Cholas often had even to pay tributes to the Pallavas. It is only from the time of Vijayalaya who founded the new Chola capital in Tanjore in the 9th century A. D. we hear of the revival of the political importance and the territorial expansion of the Chola kingdom. In the face of these incontrovertible facts it is impossible to contend that this Karur was the Vanchi of the Cheras of yore. When the whole territory in and around Karur known as Vengala nadu is proved to be part of the Cholanad from time immemorial, and when the whole of the Kongu region stretching to the west of this Vengalanadu up-to the Ghats—for nearly 300 miles is proved to have always remained a separate state not only independent of but often even hostile to the Cheras from times of yore, it is unthinkable that the Chera kings would have ever

made this Karur situated in the regions of their rivals capital of their Malainad or Chera kingdom over 300 miles away in the west coast.

(2)

We shall now turn to the Tamil classics to see what they say about this ancient Chera city of Vanchi. Sekkilar in his Periapuranam says unequivocally that the modern Kodungolur in the west coast was Vanchi the ancient Chera capital.

" மாவீற்றிருந்த பெருஞ்சிறப்பின் மன்னுந் தொன்மைமலை நாட்டுப்
பாவீற்றிருந்த பல்புகழார் பயிலுமியல் பிற்பழம் பதிதான்
சேவீற்றிருந்தார் திருவஞ்சைக்களமும் நிலவிச் சேரர்குலக்
கோவீற்றிருந்து முறைபுரியுங் குலக் கோமூதூர் கொடுங் கோளூர் "

(*Cheraman Perumal Puranam, Stz. 1*).

In this, the poet who was the great Prime Minister of King Anapaya Cholan, says that Kodungolur was the hereditary Royal seat of the Chera dynasty and that the old Vanchi murram formed a part of Kodungolur. Again in another verse Sekkilar speaks of this very place as the inner city of Vanchi.

" பொன்னார் மௌலிச் சேரலனார்............
....
....
அந்நாட்டுள்ளார் அடைய நிரந்தணைந்தார் வஞ்சி அகநகர்வாய்"

When Saint Sundarar came from his native place of Tiruvarur in the eastern Cholanad, crossing all the Kongu country on his way on a visit to the Chera king Cheraman Perumal in his Malainad, the king goes out to receive him at the gate of his city of Kodungolur which Sekkilar calls again as Vanchi.

" உதியர் பெருமான்..........
....
....
மதிதங்கிய மஞ்சணி இஞ்சி வஞ்சிமணிவாயிலை அணைந்தார் ".

(*Peria Puranam*, *Vellanai Charukkam*, *Stz. 22*).

This poet minister, Sekkilar composed his Periapuranam in the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century. He distinctly mentions that the ancient Chera city of Vanchi is the modern Kodungolur in the west coast. Saint Sundarar who propagated Saivism in the 8th century A.D. has sung of this Kadungolur or Vanchaikkalam with its harbour Mahodai.

" கடலங்கரை மேல்மகோதை அணியார் பொழில் அஞ்சைக் களத்தப்பனே

(*Sundarar Thevaram*, *Tiruvanchaikala pathikam*).

In all his ten songs Sundarar associates the Vanchaikalam with the harboured port of Mahothai. But by some metathetic solecism, the place is wrongly named in his songs as Anchaikalam instead of Vanchaikalam, as it should be. There can be no mistake however as to the identity of the place he sings about. No one dares or can suggest that there ever has been a place known as Anchaikalam at all. Vanchimurram is the name of the old Chera capital familiar to all the classics. (*Vide* வஞ்சிமுற்றம் வயக்களனாக ".—(*Puram*, *Stz. 373*).

" வஞ்சிமுற்றம் நீங்கிச் செல்வோன் "

" வளர்தலை மயங்கிய வஞ்சிமுற்றம் "

(*Chilappadikaram 25*, *Katchikathai ll. 9 and 34*).

The exact equivalent of Vanchimurram is 'Vanchaikalam'. Shortening proper names, softening the final syllables with the vowel 'ai' is common in Tamil.

Thanjai for Tanjavur, Uranthai for Uraiyur, Chennai for Chennapattanam, Muhavai for Muhavur, Thevai for Thevakottai, Nellai for Nelveli are all too familiar to every Tamilian. Vanchi by this process easily became Vanchai and Kalam is a synonym of Murram. So Vanchaikalam is only an exact equivalent of Vanchi murram. That this name Vanchaikalam was in vogue for this place is proved by references in literature. The following lines of Sekkilar quoted once before will bear out this fact.

" ....தொன்மை மலைநாட்டு
..........................பழம் பதிதான்
சேவீற்றிருந்தார் திருவஞ்சைக்களமும் நிலவிச்சேரர் குலக்
...............................கோமூதூர் கொடுங்கோளூர்."

(*Cheraman Perumal Puram, Stz. 1*).

The epithet 'thiru' is commonly added to all places of holy or sacred associations. All the two hundred and odd places sacred to the Saivites and the 108 holy shrines of the Vaishnavites have this adjunct 'thiru' prefixed to their names. So Vanchaikalam thus expanded into Thiruvanchaikalam, when the old Chera city of secular fame and associations in the classic age came to be reckoned as a holy Saivite place of pilgrimage. When again people in later times resolved this compound name into its constituent parts, it would be seen to consist of three elemental names Thiru (Holy) + Vanchai (Vanchi) + Kalam (Murram). The middle Vanchai might easily be mistaken for Anchai. For, according to Tamil grammar V (வ) is uniformly requisitioned as a cementing consonant to avoid a hiatus and to fuse two vowels ending one and beginning the other of two words to be pronounced together. Thiru plus Anchai by this rule will be Thiruvanchai. The

compound of Thiru plus Vanchai will also be Thiruvanchai according to rules of Tamil grammar. The latter may thus easily be mistaken for the former; and when this compound name is resolved again into its simpler components for purposes of prosody, and when the phonetic history of the compound is not remembered, there can be nothing easier than to mistake V at the beginning of the second halt of the compound for a mere cementing consonant and read the second component as Anchaikalam instead of the correct form of Vanchaikalam. This is the only explanation for the name Anchaikalam for the old city of Vanchi in Sundarar's songs. In any event, there can be no other alternative theory, as there has been never a place near Kodungolur or Mahothai called Anchaikalam. And Sundarar expressly couples the port Mahothai with his Anchaikalam. Obviously Mahothai was the harboured port of Kodungolur and Anchaikalam was the name given to the site of the Siva Shrine in the inner town of Kodungolur. That this is the probable origin of this name for the interior or land-side town of Kodungolur is also clear from a similar reference to this place in the Kshetrakovai of Thirunavukkarasar's Thevaram. His actual words are these: "கொடுங்கோளூர் அஞ்சைக்களம்". We see that Navukkarasar who lived in the 7th century A. D. also names the Saiva Shrine in Kodungolur as Anchaikalam. Thus it is clear that Anchaikalam must be the later metamorphosed form of the older Vanchimurram or Vanchaikalam. Vanch or Vanchimurram of the classic period known in later times as Vanchaikalam was identified with Kodungolur in the west coast by two out of the three Saiva Saints Thiru Navukkarasar in the 7th century and Sundarar in the 8th century A. D. in their respective Thevaram songs.

Sekkilar also confirms this identity of the several stanzas of his Periapuranam in the end of the 11th or early in the 12th century A. D. I already adverted to the first stanza in Seraman Perumal Nayanar Puranam which runs as follows :—

"மாவீற்றிருந்த பெருஞ்சிறப்பின்மன்னும் தோன்மைமலைநாட்டுப்
பாவீற்றிருந்த பல்புகழிற் பயிலுமியல்பிற் பழம்பதிதான்
சேவீற்றிருந்தார் திருவஞ்சைக் களமுநிலவிச் சேரர்குலக்
கோவீற்றிருந்து முறைபுரியுங் குலக்கோமூதூர் கொடுங்கோளூர்".

In this verse the erudite Chola Prime Minister unequivocally identifies the modern Kodungolur (known also as Kodunkalur or Cranganore) with the old capital of the Chera dynasty known to the earlier classics as Vanchimurram or Thiruvanchaikalam. The words underlined in the above stanza literally say this, *viz.*, "Tiruvanchaikalam, the capital city of yore of the ancient Malainad is Kodungolur the time-old royal seat of the house of the Chera kings." This leaves us in no doubt whatever. For, in this, poet Sekkilar definitely mentions two facts. One is that the ancient Thiruvanchaikalam is Kodungolur. The second is that this Kodungolur in the west coast is also the old Chera capital city of their ancient Malainad.

It is also interesting to note that to this day the people in and around Kodungolur proudly cherish the tradition that their place is the ancient Chera capital of Vanchi. Although the inland site of the Siva temple is called Anchaikalam, still there is no whisper anywhere in the neighbourhood or among the people of the place that their town itself ever bore the name of Anchaikalam.

In two or three other places and contexts in Periya puranam, Sekkilar reaffirms the identity of the old Vanchi

with the modern Kodungolur with its harbour Mahodai. In speaking of the great journey of king Cheraman Perumal on a visit to famous Saivite shrines and to Saint Sundarar the king is said to have started from Thiruvanchaikalam or Kodungolur, traversed Kongunad and to have finally reached the territories of the Cholas. (*Vide* Stzs. 46-50 of Cheraman Perumal Puranam). Similarly on his return journey the king with Saint Sundarar is said to have recrossed the Kongu territory after visiting many sacred Siva temples in the Cholanad. Cheraman Perumal and Saint Sundarar are said to have worshipped the Siva temples in the Kongu region on their westward journey and reaching the Malainad the hereditary kingdom of the Cheras they arrived ultimately at the time-old Chera capital Vanchaikalam then known as Kodungolur (*Vide* Stzs. 137-146 of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar Puranam). The significant phrases 'கொடுங்கோளூரணைந்தார்' (reached Kodungolur) in Stz. 143 and 'சென்று திருவஞ்சைக்களத்து நிகரில் தொண்டர்தமைக் கொண்டுபுகுந்தார் உதியர் நெடுந்தகையார்.' (The Chera king entered Thiruvanchaikalam with his peerless saintly friend) in Stz. 145 in the same context conclusively identify the old Vanchi with the modern Kodungolur. This same route from Tiruvarur in the Cholanad through the Kongu territory westward to the Chera capital Vanchi in the Malainad and the identity of the old Chera Vanchi with the modern sea-coast town of Kodungolur in the west are again reiterated and reaffirmed in Vellanai Charukkam of Periapuranam by the Poet-Minister Sekkilar. (*Vide* particularly Stzs. 3, 14, 15, 19, 22 of Vellanai Charukkam).

Sekkilar of course lived and composed his Periapuranam in the end of the 11th or beginning of the 12th century A. D. But king Cheraman Perumal Nayanar

and Saint Sundarar both lived in the 8th century A. D. Both upon archæological evidences and literary references the research scholars like the late Government Epigraphist Mr. Gopinatha Rao, late Professor Sundaram Pillai and late Rao Sahib Srinivasa Pillai of Tanjore have established that Sundarar and Cheraman Perumal lived and exchanged friendly visits in the 8th century A. D. King Cheraman Perumal ruled the old Chera kingdom of Malainad from the ancient Vanchi or Thiruvanchaikalam which was identified with Kodungolur in the Thevaram Songs of Thirunavukkarasar and Sundarar and the verses of Sekkilar in Periapuranam. What makes these references particularly significant and important is their insistence that this Kodungolur alias Vanchaikalam was the time old dynastic capital of the Royal House of the Chera Kings and not a newly acquired capital of the Cheras as suggested by the new school of Pandits.

(3)

Let us now turn to the older Tamil classics of the Sangam age and see if any and what guidance they may give us in this research. The author of Chilappadikaram was an ascetic prince and junior brother of the great warrior-king Cheran Chenguttuvan. He personally listened to the story of Kannaki, the heroine of his epic poem Chilappadikaram as narrated by poet Sattanar who was a bard of the Tamil Sangam in the capital of the Pandyan king and who was an eyewitness of the incidents of Kannaki's life in so far as they happened in that capital city of Madura. The author of Chilappadikaram describes the route taken by Kannaki when she left Madura after burning down that city in vindication of the innocence of her husband victimised by the blind rage of the Pandyan king. Kannaki is said to have entered the Royal Pandyan city with her husband by the main

eastern gate of the city, and to have sorrowfully effected her exit alone in widow's weeds, after the murder of her husband, by the western gate of Madura and to have proceeded directly westward along the bank of the Vagai river right up to the foot of the Western Ghats and to have ascended the Chengunru hills in the Chera's Malainad (*Vide* ll. 182—200 of Katturaikathai No. 23, Chilappadikaram). Chilappadikaram further says that poet Sattanar in narrating this part of Kannaki's story to the king Chenguttuvan fancifully suggested that the widowed Kannaki did not wish to go in her lonely state to the Choḷanad from where she went to Madura with her husband, and reached the hill of Chengunru in the heart of the Chera kingdom in the west coast as if to report the tyranny of the Pandyan king to, and seek protection of, the Chera king. This is narrated in Katchikathai No. 25 of Chilappadikaram in lines 82—92. On hearing the poet Sattanar and the hillmen who were eyewitnesses to the last act of Kannaki climbing the Chengunru hill in the western Malainad Chenguttuvan's queen is said to have expressed her preference to build a temple to Kannaki as she last departed the world from their own kingdom.

"............நம் அகல் நாடடைந்தவிப்
பத்தினிக்கடவுளைப்பரசல் வேண்டும்"

(*ll. 113-4 of Katchikathai*).

This also shows that this western Malainad where Kannaki last appeared alive was Chenguttuvan's kingdom. If Chenguttuvan ruled the territory round the modern Karur and if Malainad in the west was an independent principality ruled over by another branch of the Chera House, as suggested by Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar, Chenguttuvan's queen would not have claimed the western Malainad as a kingdom of her husband as she is said to

have done in these lines just quoted. All these narrations by the Chera prince-poet Ilango in his epic of Chilappadikaram make one fact clear beyond the possibility of doubt. Kannaki goes to the Chera kingdom in the west actually crossing the Western Ghats to Chengunru near Chenguttuvan's capital Vanchi. Chengunru is due west of Madura and is a hill west of the Ghats and not far away from the modern Kodungolur. (Chilappadikaram III edition 1927, p. 19). This situation of Chengunru is also admitted by Pandit Raghava Iyengar in his prose-biography of Chenguttuvan. (First edition 1915 pp. 134-5).

The course of the river Vaigai which Kannaki followed runs due west of Madura to the Western Ghats and Chengunru is as the crow flies at least 100 miles due west from Madura and beyond the Ghats. If the modern Karur in the Trichinopoly District were the old Vanchi and capital of Chenguttuvan, Kannaki in her quest of Chenguttuvan's protection should proceed from Madura in a due northerly direction. For Karur is about 40 miles west of Trichinopoly and about 100 miles due north of Madura. Besides Karur is over 130 miles east of the Western Ghats. There can be no reason whatever for her to proceed westward along the banks of the river Vaigai to the Ghats to seek the Chera capital if it were near Trichinopoly. Nor the two poets Sattanar and Ilango both of them almost contemporaries of the eventful incidents in Kannaki's life could be expected to suggest that Kannaki's westward journey from Madura was in quest of the protection of the Chera king ruling in Karur 100 miles due north of Madura, and over 130 miles east of the Ghats. These narrations in Ilango's epic of Chilappadikaram in the name of the poet Sattanar

therefore unmistakably conclude that Chenguttuvan's capital Vanchi could be nowhere near Karur in Trichinopoly District and was on the contrary to be sought somewhere due west of Madura along the course of Vaigai river and beyond the Western Ghats and near the Arabian Sea.

Again there is another reference in Chilappadikaram that clinches this view of the topography of the old Chera capital Vanchi. A learned Brahman mendicant Parasaran by name and a resident citizen in the eastern kingdom of the Puhar Cholas went to the capital of the Cheras seeking the generous bounty of the contemporary munificent Chera king, Palyanai Chelkezhu Kuttuvan, the uncle of Cheran Chenguttuvan and the hero of canto 3 in Pathirruppattu. The route he took from the eastern Chola kingdom to the Chera king's capital is described in Katturaikathai No. 23 of Chilappadikaram. Crossing the boundary of the Chola kingdom Parasaran is said to have traversed wide stretches of country and forest westward and to have actually crossed the Ghats or the Malaya Mountains, and putting the Western Ghats to his back to have proceeded further west to meet the Chera king in his capital. But after he received the Chera king's munificent bounty in his capital, he is said to have proceeded directly southward from the Chera city to see the Pandyan kingdom before reaching his own home in the Chola country. These facts are narrated in ll. 56-75 and 79 of Katturaikathai 23. The most pertinent part of this reference runs as follows :—

"பூம் புனற் பழனப்புகார் நகர்வேந்தன்
தாங்காவிளையுள் நன்னாடதனுள்
வலவைப்பார்ப்பான் பராசர னென்போன்

குலவு வேற்சேரன் கொடைத்திறங் கேட்டு
வண்தமிழ்மறை யோற்கு வானுறை கொடுத்த
திண்டிறல் நெடுவேற் சேரலற் காண்கென
காடும் நாடும் ஊரும் போகி
நீடுநிலை மலயம் பிற்படச் சென்றாங்கு
....
நாவலங் கொண்டு நண்ணா ரோட்டி
....
நன்கலங் கொண்டுதன் பதிப்பெயர்வோன்
செங்கோல் தென்னவன் திருந்து தொழில் மறையவர்
தங்கால் என்பது ஊரே அவ்வூர்
....
களைந்தனன் இருப்போன்

(*Chilappadikaram Kathai 23. ll 56—75 and 79.*)

Although the name Vanchi does not appear in the lines under reference the context leaves no room for doubt as to the destination of Parasaran herein referred to. The poet definitely says that Parasaran went to the capital of the Chera king who was no other than the uncle of Chenguttuvan. Chenguttuvan's capital Vanchi is not mentioned in any of the ten verses or in the epilogue to canto 5 of Pathirruppattu dedicated entirely to panegyrize the glory and triumph of king Chenguttuvan. Yet no one will dispute that Chenguttuvan's capital was Vanchi as that fact appears in the epic Chilappadikaram composed by Chenguttuvan's own brother. That the capital of his uncle and predecessor on the Chera throne could not be other than Vanchi is also clear from the admission of the Pandits themselves that Imayavaramban, the elder brother of Palyanai Chelkezhu Kuttuvan ruled the Chera kingdom before the latter with Vanchi for his capital. (*Vide* page 11, 2nd edition of Cheran

Chenguttuvan by Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar). If his elder brother before him and his own nephew after him ruled the Chera country from Vanchi, it is only fair to hold that the same Vanchi was the capital of Palyanai-Chelkezhu-Kuttuvan who sat on the Chera throne between the reigns of the other two kings of his own dynasty, and this would almost be a certainty unless there is any indication in any of the verses relating to this Chera king to suggest that his capital was some place other than Vanchi. Far from such a suggestion the elogiums of this king which form canto 3 in Pathirruppattu immediately after canto 2 in praise of his senior brother Imayavaramban and before cantos 4—6 in praise of his three nephews who wore the Chera crown after him would suggest that he succeeded his elder brother Imayavaramban and preceded his nephew Chenguttuvan on their admitted Chera throne in Vanchi. It is also admitted at page 14 in Chapter 2, of Chenguttuvan's prose biography by Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar that the ten cantos of Pathirruppattu have been arranged only in accordance with the order of succession of their hero-kings to the Chera throne. The epilogue to canto 3 simply says that this king was the junior brother of Imayavaramban the hero of the 2nd canto and he is also said to have ruled over the Malainad as a Chera king. I have already cited the line

> " நிலநாடெல்லை தன்மலை நாடென்ன "
>
> (*Manimekalai, Kathai 26, l 80.*)

in praise of Chenguttuvan in another connection. And this line definitely says that Malainad the kingdom of Palyanai Chelkezhu Kuttuvan was also the kingdom of Cheran Chenguttuvan. Thus the references about king Palyanai Chelkezhu Kuttuvan the uncle and predecessor

of Chenguttuvan on the Chera throne also point to Vanchi the capital of the Cheras being in Malainad which is admitted by the Pandits to be the country lying between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. (*Vide* page 156 of his prose biography of Chenguttuvan, 2nd edition 1929).

There is yet another reference in Chilappadikaram which reinforces the truth that king Chenguttuvan's capital Vanchi was a city in his Malainad in the west coast. Speaking of Chenguttuvan's military expedition against the North Aryan kings in the Gangetic valleys his ascetic brother Ilango minutely describes in his epic poem of Chilappadikaram the ceremonious start of the king at the head of his army from his capital Vanchi as follows :

"...............................வஞ்சிநீங்கி
தண்டத்தலை வருந்தலைத் சார்ச் சேனையும்
வெண்டலைப் புணரியின் விளிம்பு சூழ்போத,
மலைமுதுகு நெளிய, நிலைநாடதர்பட,
உலகமன்னவன் ஒருங்குடன் சென்று ஆங்கு
ஆலும்புரவி அணித்தேர்த்தானையொடு
நீலகிரியின் நெடும்புறத்திறுத்தாங்கு."

(*Chilappadikaram, Kalkolkathai 26, ll. 79-85.*)

Translated in simple English these lines would read as follows : " Leaving Vanchi the king with his generals and the vanguard rounded the coast with the white foamed waves touching the edge of their wing ; marched across the mountains, making the back of the Ghats writhe and hitch under the tramp of the troops ; and passing by the plains as their route they reached the foot of the Nilgiris where they halted in encampment." This

description of the route of Chenguttuvan and his expeditionary force from his capital Vanchi to the foot of the Nilgiri hills enroute to the Aryan region in the Gangetic valleys by his own brother is as lucid as it is positive. In the same contest a little further off the prince Ilango says that " breaking his camp at the foot of the Nilgiris the king marched northward to the Ganges and crossed the river by boat and engaged and routed the hostile Aryan forces in the trans-Ganges regions.

" பாடியிருக்கை நீங்கிப்பெயர்ந்து
கங்கைப் பேரியாற்றுக் கன்னரிற்பெற்ற
வங்கப்பரப்பின் வடமருங்கெய்தி
....
பகைப்புலம் புக்குப் பாசறையிருந்த
தகைப்பருந்தானை மறவோன்
....
வடதிசை மருங்கின் மன்னவ ரெல்லாம்
....
நிலந்திரைத்தானை யொடுநிகர்த்து மேல்வர
....
காஞ்சித்தானையொடு காவலன்மலைப்ப
....
அடுந்தேர்த்தானை ஆரிய அரசர்
கடும்படை மாக்களைக்கொன்று களங்குவித்து ".

(*Ibid ll.* 175-181. 184, 187, 191, 211-2)

If Chenguttuvan's capital Vanchi were the modern town of Karur in Trichinopoly District the king and his army would have only proceeded due north from their city towards their destination in the Gangetic valleys. They have no reason whatever to travel due west to the Nilgiris which is about 150 miles from Karur. Much less would there be any occasion for them in this march to

cross any mountains before reaching the foot of the Nilgiris or for their edging the waves of any foaming sea. There is neither any mountain to cross nor any sea to touch on any route between Karur in the east and the Nilgiris in the west. On the other hand if Chenguttuvan's Vanchi was the modern Kodungolur on the west coast this description of the Chilappadikaram is admirably accurate of the only possible route for the military expeditionary force starting from Vanchi to go to the trans-Ganges Aryan territories. Any army auspiciously starting on any military expedition would leave the city only by the main gate. The opening line in this description just cited definitely mentions that Chenguttuvan and his army started from Vanchi. If that Vanchi were the modern Karur in Trichinopoly District there is no sea for any gate of its citadel to face in any direction round about the city. If it were Kodungolur then it is clear that this marine city on the west coast would naturally have its main gate facing west towards its harbour. And Chenguttuvan and his army emerging by this gate out of their ancient city would first touch the sea before turning round eastward to cross the Western Ghats, known as the Malaya mountains, by the Palghat Pass and taking the plains on the eastern slopes of the Ghats they would have marched northward. Nilgiris would then rightly come on their way from the Palghat plains to the banks of the Ganges. This one reference in Chilappadikaram should suffice by itself to prove that Chenguttuvan's Vanchi could only be west of the Ghats and touching the sea, in the western coast of Malainad. Prince Ilango's contemporary poet Sattanar has composed another epic named Manimekalai. It recounts the life of Manimekalai the beautiful and virtuous daughter of Kannaki's husband Kovalan and of his paramour Madhavi. In that poem

Manimekalai is said to have started from an island Manipallavam south-east of the then Chola capital and emporium, Puhar, at the mouth of the river Kaviri with a definite object of going to Vanchi.

> " ......வஞ்சியுட் செல்வனென்று
> அந்தரத் தெழுந்தனள் அணியிழைதானென ".

(*Manimekalai Kathai 25 ll. 238-9*)

Sattanar then says that after leaving the island of Manipallavam Manimekalai took an ærial flight to her destination and on her way to Vanchi alighted on the Chengunru hills to worship at the shrine built and dedicated by Chenguttuvan to Kannaki her father's wedded wife, deified after her death.

> " ....அணியிறை அந்தரமாறா வெழுந்து
> தணியாக்காதல் தாய் கண்ணகியையும்
> கொடைகெழுதாதை கோவலன் தன்னையும்
> கடவுளெழுதிய படிவம் காணிய
> வேட்கைதுரப்பக் கோட்டம் புகுந்து
> வணங்கி நின்று.........................."

(*Ibid. Vanchimanagar Pukka Kathai 26, ll. 1-6*)

The poet Sattanar here expressly says in these two references just quoted from Manimekalai that the deliberate distination of Manimekalai when she left the island of Manipallavam was only Vanchi. There is no room to infer that she had any other desire to go to Chengunru or to offer worship to her father's wife Kannaki in her new temple. These lines of Sattanar make it perfectly clear that Manimekalai alighted and offered worship to the images of Kannaki and her husband in the temple on the Chengunru hills only because the temple and the hills happened to be on her way to Vanchi. She did not go there

to offer this worship, as her sole intention and motive for the aerial trip are said to be to go to Vanchi to meet her own mother Madhavi and her foster-mother Suthamathi who were said to have taken asylum and refuge in Vanchi after the subsidence of their city of Pukar. (*Vide* Manimekalai, Kathai 25 ll. 201-206 and 238-9) Karur in Trichinopoly District is over 130 miles east of the Western Ghats while Chengunru hills is about 30 miles west of the Ghats. Nothing would be more unnatural for Manimekalai to have not only deviated from her way to Vanchi if Vanchi were Karur as far west as the Ghats, but also to have aimlessly crossed the Western Ghats and proceeded to Chengunru hills west of the Ghats and nearer the sea. On the other hand if Vanchi was Kodungolur in the west coast, this route she is said to have followed in these references from Sattanar's Manimekalai would be just the proper way for Manimekalai to take from the southeastern island of Manipallavam to Chenguttuvan's Vanchi on the west coast. Anyone from Cholanad in the east would have to cross the Western Ghats to reach Kodungolur on the western sea ; and the Chengunru hills between the Ghats and this old Chera capital would then be on the way.

What Sattanar says about Manimekalai's entry into Vanchi after leaving Chengunru is even more irreconcilable with the suggestion that Vanchi was anywhere east of the Western Ghats. The following are the references in Sattanar's epic bearing upon this last stage of Manimekalai's flight to Chenguttuvan's Vanchi :—

" இன்ன திவ்வியல் பெனத்தாயெடுத்துரைத்தலும்,
இளையோள் வளையோள் என்றுனக்கு யாவரும்
விளைபொருளுரையார் வேற்றுருக்கொள்கென,
மையறு சிறப்பிற் றெய்வதந்தந்த

மந்திரமோதியோர் மாதவன் வடிவாய்
தேவகுலமும் தெற்றியும் பள்ளியும்
பூமலர்ப் பொழிலும் பொய்கையும் மிடைந்து
நற்றவமுனிவரும் கற்றடங்கினரும்
நன்னெறி காணிய தொன்னூற் புலவரும்
எங்கணும் விளங்கிய எயிர்புற இருக்கையில்,—
செங்குட்டுவன் எனும்செங்கோல் வேந்தன்
பூத்தவஞ்சி பூவா வஞ்சியில்
....
போற் கோடிப் பெயர்ப்படூஉம் போன்னகர்ப் பொலிந்தனள்"

(Ibid Kathai 26. ll. 67-73 and 92).

The substance of these lines in short is this: 'Apotheosized Kannaki in response to Manimekalai's invocation appeared to her and after narrating all that happened to herself and her husband Kovalan, Manimekalai's own father, in Madura offered her advice as to what she should do for her own future salvation. In accordance with this advice Manimekalai disguising herself as a male anchorite with the help of some mystic mantram left Chengunru hills and reached the shady and sheltered and well-watered outskirts of the citadel or fort walls of the city of Vanchi nestling with monasteries, places of worship and sequestered asylums of people doing penances. Ascetics and anchorites are always said to avoid great cities and to seek shelter only in the secluded suburbs in the outskirts. Kannaki with her husband on reaching Madura sought refuge only in the quiet outskirts of the fortified Pandyan capital, and that part of the town has been described in almost identical terms and as being also the favourite resort of ascetics and anchorites in Chilappadikaram.

" புள்ளணி கழனியும் பொழிலும் பொருந்தி
வெள்ளநீர்ப்பண்ணையும் விரிநீரேரியும்
காய்க்குலைத் தெங்கும் வாழையும் கமுகும்
வேய்த்திரட் பந்தரும் விளங்கிய இருக்கை,
அறம்புரிமாந்தர் அன்றிச்சேராப்
புறஞ்சிறைமூதூர் புக்கனர்புரிந்தென் "

(Kathai 13. ll. 191-6).

The words referring to the outskirts of Madura in the Chilappadikaram lines just quoted are Puram-chirai-moodoor (புறஞ் சிறை மூதூர்). Puram means outside, chirai means fort and moodoor means old town. The phrase therefore means outskirts of the fortified old town, and that part of the city of Madura is said to be the favoured resort of " arampuri manthar " அறம் புரி மாந்தர்) those engaged in penances. Similar words employed in referring to the outskirts of Vanchi in the lines quoted above are " yeyil-pura-irukkai " (எயிற்புற விருக்கை). Yeyil means a fort; puram of course means outside, irukkai means place. The phrase thus means the place outside the fort. Here again the poet tells us that these outskirts of Vanchi are also full of shaded groves and freshwater-ponds and form the asylum of munivars (ascetics) and quiet sadhus (anchorites). We have another significant reference to this sequestered and sheltered resorts of anchorites, monks and mendicants in the outskirts of Vanchi in the opening lines of the prologue to Chilappadikaram.

" குணவாயிற் கோட்டத்து அரசு துறந்திருந்த
குடக்கோச்சேரல் இளங்கோவடிகட்கு ".

Literally these lines when translated would read as follows: " To the ascetic junior Chera prince who was residing in a monastic Chapel in the proximity

of the east gate of Vanchi". Reading these lines of Chilappadikaram with those of Sattanar in Manimekalai referring to the outskirts of Vanchi first reached by Manimekalai after leaving Chengunru hills, we receive further light as to the indentity of the place. The first halt of Manimekalai after leaving Chengunru must be thus the outskirts near the east gate of the fortified Vanchi town. In this east gate suburb Manimekalai is said to have held debates with the leaders of different schools of thought and theologians.

From this suburb 'Kunavayil Purakudi' outside the east gate, Sathanar tells us in Kathai No. 28 of his Epic 'Manimekalai', that his heroine entered the walled residential city in the heart or the centre of Vanchi; which he significantly describes as (இடைநிலைவரைப்பு) Idainelaivaraippu. Idai+nilai+varaippu means the middle or central part or premises. And finally she makesher exit through the western main gate of Vanchi to fly north to Kanchipuram—her original destination. If Karur near Trichinopoly were Vanchi, then Manimekalai would not have to cross the Ghats at all; and would ordinarily enter that city on her way north to Kanchi only by the south gate and emerge out by the north gate. On no accountshould Manimekalai seek the western gate for exit to proceed to Kanchi lying east by north from Karur. It is only Kodungolur in the west coast would have its maingate in the west facing the harbour and thesea front; and Manimakalai from the Chengundru hills would, to reach this citadel, have to approach it from the east, and after seeing round the place, would emerge through the western main harbour or sea-ward gate. This detailed description of Vanchi in Manimekalai therefore would not square with Karur in the Cholanad, but

fits in only with the maritime or sea fronted Kodungolur in the west coast.

(4)

Those who hold that Karur in Trichinopoly District was the ancient Chera capital city of Vanchi rely on what they believe to be two coincidences.

(1) Karur in Trichinopoly District is also called "Vanchularanyam" or "Vanchuladavi" in the Karur-Thalapuranam.

"வஞ்சுளாரணியம் வஞ்சிகருவூர்............"

(Cheran Chenguttuvan, 2nd edition p. 162).

"ஒது தொல்பதியவற்றின் உதியர் கோனாட்டின்
மீதுயர்ந்த ஆம்பிராவதி நதிக்கரை மிசையில்
தாது போதவிழ் வஞ்சுளாடவி எனச்சாற்றும்
ஆதிமாபுரச் சிறப்பினை அளந்துரைத்தனனால்"

(Karur Thalapuranam—Section Varahacharukam Stz. 18).

(2) Vanchi was also known as Karuvur. For this they quote the following lines of poet Nakkirar in Stz. No. 93 in Ahananuru.

"................................கோதை
திருமாவியனகர்க் கருவூர் முன்றுறைத்
தெண்ணீர் உயர்கரை குவையிய
தண்ணான் பொருனை மணலினும் பலவே"

They argue that Vanchi must be a contraction of Vanchuladavi, and Karur is abbreviation of Karuvur and the conclusion is drawn that Karur in Trichinopoly District must therefore be the ancient Chera capital of Vanchi. But there are obvious fallacies in these contentions; and facts and references from literature negative

the conclusions. And let us see what Tamil literature has to say about these contentions.

In the first place Karurthalapuranam which is the only authority for Karur's names Vanchuladavi or Vanchularanyam is a recent anonymous fiction, and it was composed even according to Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar not more than 300 years ago. Thalapuranams are new compositions full of fabled inventions and concocted myths deliberately woven to give prestige and create antiquity for places to gratify the ambition of the residents therein. They are utterly unreliable for any historical investigations. Vanchularanyam and Vanchuladavi are both Sanskrit compounds meaning a forest or grove of Asoku trees; Vanchulam = Asoku; adavi or aranyam = a forest. Pandit Raghava Iyengar also says in page 162 of his prose biography of Cheran Chenguttuvan (2nd edn.) that Karur got this name only because there were Asoku groves all around the place. Now these Sanskrit causal names for Karur were not known to any literature or inscriptions relating to Karur prior to this new anonymous Karurthalapuranam. Pandit Raghava Iyengar himself sorrowfully admits that all inscriptions in and about Karur only refer to it as a Chola possession and with exclusive Chola associations. (*Vide* pp. 130-1 of Cheran Chenguttuvan 1st edn. 1915). In fact all the old inscriptions in Karur of five Chola kings dating from the 9th century A. D. mention that Karur was ever a Chola city. (*Vide* South Indian Inscriptions Vol. III Nos. 20 to 26). Periyapuranam was composed early in the 12th century A. D. by Sekkilar the great prime minister of the famous and flourishing Chola kingdom. In his great masterpiece held in high esteem in the world of scholars both for its literary merit and

historic accuracy, this Karur of Karuvur in Trichinopoly District is mentioned in more places than one : and always and in every context, it is expressly described as the hereditary and cherished Chola possession and not adverted to as ever having been a Chera city acquired or annexed by the Chola kings by conquest. *Vide* :—

" தங்கள் குலமரபின் முதற்றனி நகராங் கருவூரில் "

(*Periapuranam, Pukazh-Chola nayanar puranam Stz. 11*)

Again

" மன்னிய அநபாயன் சீர்மரபின் மாநகரமாகும்
தொன்னெடுங் கருவூரென்னும் சுடர்மணி வீதிமூதூர் "

(*Ibid Yeripathar Stz. 2*)

If as suggested by Pandit Raghava Iyengar Karur were the ancient Vanchi of the Chera kings and only because a Chola city by the latter's military conquest in later times, Sekkilar—the Chola minister could not forget and would not fail to speak of this proud laurel of his patrons. Much less would he venture to mention deliberately that this Karuvur was always the proud hereditary Chola possession. Even the anonymous author of Karurthalapuranam, relied on by Pandit Raghava Iyengar for his new thesis completely gives his case away by admitting in another context in that very Thalapuranam that this Karur was the ancient seat of the monarchs of the royal Chola House.

" ....

குடிசூழ் கொங்கர் குடபுலத்தோர் கொணருந்திறை கண்டிடல் வேண்டி
படிசூழனிகம் அமைச்சர்பரிசன மொய்கொளத் தம்பழம் பதியாம்
கடிசூழ்வாவிக் கருவூரினணைந்தார் முரசங்கலந்தார்ப்ப "

(*Karur Thalapuranam, Yeripatta Charukkam Stz. 5*)

This is not all. There are yet more revealing references in Periapuranam. Far from claiming this Karur in the Cholanad to be the Chera capital of yore, the great Chola minister Sekkilar expressly identifies the ancient Vanchi with Kodungolur in the west coast. (*Vide*)

" சேவீற்றிருந்தார் திருவஞ்சைக்களமும் நிலவிச் சேரர்குலக்
கோவீற்றிருந்து முறைபுரியுங் குலக்கோமூதூர் கொடுங்கோளூர்."

(*Periapuranam—Cheraman Perumal puranam Stz. 7*)

Again in speaking of the rousing reception given by king Cheraman Perumal to Saint Sundarar in Kodungolur, Sekkilar says as follows :—

" உதியர் பெருமான் பெருஞ்சேனை ஓதம் கிளர்ந்தார்ப்ப
....
மதிதங்கிய மஞ்சணியிஞ்சி வஞ்சிமணிவாயிலை யணைந்தார்."

(*Ibid—Vellanai Charukkam Stz. 22*).

In both these contexts, Sekkilar not merely identifies Kodungolur as the Cheras' Vanchi, but emphasizes the important central fact that this Kodungolur always was the hereditary Chera capital and seat of power from times immemorial. Nothing can be clearer than these references in Periapuranam. For they lucidly and equally emphatically affirm in the respective contexts that Kodungolur in the west coast was always the ancient Vanchi of the Chera kings, and that Karur in the eastern Kaviri valley was ever the hereditary Chola possession. These statements have been made in the 12th century A. D. when the Chola monarchs were just recovering their prestige lost since Cheran Chenguttuvan's time and made by no less an authority thana great Chola minister of state.

I shall now mention some other references in the ancient classics which are even more damaging and fatal to the Pandits' thesis. I have already adverted to the fact that the names Vanchuladavi and Vanchularanyam for Karur were coined and used for the first time in the recent Karur Thalapuranam by its ambitious but anonymous author. And the reason given for these names for Karur both by that anonymous author and by the Pandits is that Karur took that name from the groves of Asoku trees in and about that town. If these names were not known before they were advertised in the recent Karurthalapuranam and could have no application before the Asoku groves were planted there, and if all the Chola inscriptions of five Chola kings in Karur dating from the 9th century A. D. and the several verses of the Chola minister Sekkilar in his great work of Periapuranam composed in the 12th century A. D. speak of the place only by its proper name 'Karuvur' the Chera Vanchi of the early classics should be some place other than this Karur of course: and Sekkilar says it was Kodungolur in the west coast. Apart from this apriori reasoning and Sekkilar's assurances, the old Sangam classics themselves negative the new attempt to identify the ancient Chera Vanchi with the Chola city of Karur in a very conclusive manner.

Both the great old epics of Chilappadikaram and Manimekalai were composed by poets who were contemporaries of the Chera king Chenguttuvan. They both expressly and repeatedly reiterate the time-old tradition that the ancient Vanchi was so called not in reference to any Asoku or any other trees but by the Tamil name of a creeper, Vanchi whose flower was always the symbol of successful military expeditions

'Vanchulam' is the Sanskrit name for an Asoku Tree. The capital of the Cheras existed from time immemorial, long before Sanskrit itself was systematized. Its ancient name 'Vanchi' can have no reference whatever to this fancied reasoned Sanskrit derivations. The great ancient classic poets themselves definitely affirm that the old Chera city took its name not from any trees, but only from the Tamil name of the creeper 'Vanchi'. (*Vide*).

(1) " பொற்கொடி வஞ்சியிற் பொருந்திய வண்ணமும் "

(Manimekalai, Pathikam, l. 86)

(2) " பொற் கொடிப் பெயர்ப்படூஉம்
திருந்திய நன்னகர் "

(Ibid, Kathai 28, ll. 101 and 102)

(3) " பொற்கொடிப் பெயர்ப்படூஉம் பொன்னகர் "

(Ibid, Kathai 26, l. 92)

(4) " பொற்கொடி மூதூர்ப்புரிசை வலங்கொண்டு "

(Ibid, Kathai, 28, l. 170)

The clear thesis of the Pandits and of the anonymous author of Karur Thalapuranam is equally definite of course. According to them the real genesis of the name 'Vanchi' for Karur in Trichinopoly District is to be found in the Sanskrit name "Vanchulam" for the Asoku trees found in and around Karur. The Tamil classics of the 2nd century A. D. emphatically declare that the ancient Chera capital owes its name 'Vanchi' solely to the creeper of that name associated with the city. The creeper's Tamil name Vanchi differs as distinctly from the Sanskrit name 'Vanchulam' for Asoku trees as cheese does from chalk. To suggest that an ancient Tamil name must be attributed to a fanciful later Sanskrit deri-

vation is in itself unwarranted and it would be the height of presumption to assume that the Sanskrit name of a gigantic tree is the same as the pure old Tamil name for a creeper adopted as a symbol for military valour, and for victorious expeditions in Tamil books like Tholkappiam proved to be over 2,500 years old, and then to argue that the ancient Chera Capital Vanchi associated always from time immemorial with this creeper must be identified with a later town of the rival Chola kings in the eastern plains whose Tamil name has always been only Karuvur, but to which some recent anonymous author fancifully suggested a more sounding Sanskrit name in reference to a grove of trees imaginarily associated with that Chola town.

Their second line of approach to identify the later eastern Chola town of Karuvur with the ancient west Coast Chera capital Vanchi is in the resemblance of the name Karuvur. The Chola town is always called as Karur or more properly ' Karuvur.' The Chera capital was always known as 'Vanchi' ; but there are some contexts in the classics which refer to the fort or walled residential quarters of Vanchi as Karuvur. One such is the quotation from Nakkirar's stanza in Ahananuru already cited

"..................................கோதை
திருமாவிய நகர்க்கருவூர் முன்றுறை."

I shall presently show that this line of Nakkirar itself disproves the suggested identity of the Chera capital with the Chola town of Karur. Meantime, I should take leave to show how fallacious it is to identify or confuse different places merely by the similarity of their names. Even if there were two places alone with this same or similar name, it would be wrong to make their common name a

basis for any inference as to their identity. But there are as many as four places at least with the name of Karuvur. Sekkilar's positive references in his Periapuranam both to the Chola town of Karuvur in Trichinopoly District, and to the Chera city of Kodungolur at the mouth of the Periyar in the west coast definitely called Karuvur have been mentioned already in this thesis above. There is a Karur on the Periyar but far inland nearer the hills, visited by late Mr. Kanakasabai Pillai and fancied by him to be the ancient 'Vanchi.' There is yet another Karuvur in the Mizhalai Karuvur or district in the Eastern Chola country mentioned in the Chola inscriptions in Kumbakonam Temple Walls also. These four places have the name Karuvur in common between them. But who would imagine that because of their common names they all should or any two of them must be one and the same place.

There are two places named Thondi, one in the Chera Malainadu in the west coast, and the other in the east coast of the Pandiyan-country. So also are two Musiris, and two Tanjais or Tanjores in two different kingdoms. No one would ever think of identifying these places by reason of the sameness or similarity of their names. As against the mere name, I have referred to positive pronouncements in authoritative old Tamil Works like Sekkilar's Periyapuranam and in the Chola inscriptions of the 10th century A. D. (Ins. 20 to 26—Vol. III of the Government publications of the South-Indian Inscriptions), which definitely identify the old Chera Vanchi with Kodungolur in the west coast, and declaring Karur in Trichinopoly District to be ever an exclusive Chola possession from yore. This should suffice to negative the new thesis, or suggestion based on a mere similarity of names.

I shall now advert to some constructive indications in the old Tamil classics, which give us cogent and satisfactory proofs for identifying the old Vanchi with Kodungolur in the west coast. Karuvur is not familiar to or commonly met with in the old Tamil classics as a name for Vanchi. One can easily come across over a hundred contexts in the many early classic poems, all referring to the Chera capital city only by the familiar name of Vanchi. Not a single textual reference to the name Karuvur for Vanchi other than the one line of Nakkirar just quoted is yet found or cited. If Karuvur is the old name for Vanchi, one should hear of it more than once in the innumerable references to this classic city in the several classic poems of many an ancient author of this augustan period of Tamil Literature. The total absence of any reference to this name Karuvur for Vanchi in the numerous contexts in the two great epics of Manimekalai and Silappadikaram, and all the old poems of Pathirruppattu of ten different authors, which are all devoted to eulogise the Chera king's and their city is conspicuously significant. The Truth of the matter is that Vanchi is the only real name for the ancient Chera Metropolis. But the fort or walled landward royal residence as apart from the sea-side harbour was known as Vanchi murram or Karuvur; and the harboured seaward portion was called 'Musiri' in the prehistoric period, and 'Mahodhai' in the medieval times. I have already explained the significance of the names Vanchi murram and Vanchaikalam. Murrams and Kalams are only synonyms which generally indicate a court or level terraine. In scores of contexts, the old classics refer to this Chera capital only by the familiar name of Vanchi; but references are not wanting to the name Vanchi-Murram. *Vide.*

1. " வஞ்சி முற்றம் வயக்களனாக "

(*Puram 373)*

2. " வஞ்சி முற்றம் நீங்கிச் செல்வோன் "

(*Line 9 of Katchi Chilappu)*

3. வளந்தலை மயங்கிய வஞ்சி முற்றத்து

(*Ibid, L. 34)*

The places where this name Vanchi murram appears in the classics, reveal to scrutiny the significant fact that in all of them the reference is not to the city in general, but only to the fortified royal residence. Where merely the city as such is intended without any special reference to the inland walled town, the ordinary name of Vanchi is employed; but whenever the fort or the walled terraine of the city was meant, the more appropriate name Vanchimurram is used, which indicates that the poet there intended to refer not vaguely to the old city, but to the Murram or the terraine of Vanchi. Similarly where only the harbour alone is intended, the name musiri and not Vanchi is used. This explains the references in the Periplus to ' Musiris ' or ' Muchiris ' as the Port, and to ' Karuvur ' as the inland royal citadel. This is also why the classics, which commonly speak of Vanchi as the city of the Cheras, refer to the royal residence therein as Vanchi-murram or Vanchiaganagar.

' வஞ்சி முற்றம் நீங்கிச்செல்வோன்.'

(*line 7 Katchikathai-Chilappathikaram*)

meaning " As king Chenguttuvan emerged out of Vanchi-murram." Again, Sekkilar refers to the royal residence of Cheraman Perumal as Vanchiaganagar, which means literally the inner parts or premises of the city of Vanchi.

Thus it is clear from times of yore that the ancient Chera-capital city 'Vanchi' included in its ambit or range both the harbour 'Musiri' and the fortified terraine Vanchimurram. In the times of the Saiva Saints and poets *i.e.*, from 7th century A. D., the harbour 'musiri' came to be known as 'mahothai', and the terram 'Vanchimurram' was called 'Vanchaikalam' or Kodungolur. Saint Appar's Thevaram composed in the 8th century A.D., and Periapuranam lines already cited prove this beyond any doubt.

"கடலங் கரைமேன் மகோதை
அணியார் பொழி லஞ்சைக் களத்தப்பனே"

(*Sundarar-Thevaram, Thiruvanjaikala pathikam.*)

The very first stanza of Cheraman-perumal nayanar Puranam quoted before in this thesis difinitely names the Chera capital as Vanchaikalam or Kodungolur.

"சேவீற்றிருந்தார் திருவஞ்சைக்களமும் நிலவிச் சேரர் குலக்
கோவீற்றிருந்து முறைபுரியுங் குலக் கோமூதூர் கொடுங்
கோளூர்."

The piers, the wharves and godowns were all in the harbour known as Musiri alias Mahodhai. The royal palace, the Siva temple and the dwelling houses were all in the central walled terraine west of the harbour, and known as Vanchimurram or Karuvur in the classic age and as Vanchaikalam or Kodungolur in later times. And further east of this fortified city lay the suburb known as 'Kunavayil' or eastern-gate. To this day this topography of this ancient city stands without any material alteration. There is still the harbour at the mouth of the river Periyar, now known as *Alwaye* Above that is the town Kodungolur; and a little to the east lies the hamlet still

called Kunavayil. In the age of the Tamil classics the central fortified city lay between the harbour in the west and the suburb in the east. The eastern suberb is called Purakkudi (புறக்குடி) or outlying hamlet (in the epic of Manimekalai) just as the outskirts of the Pandiyan Capital Madura was called Purancheri (புறஞ்சேரி). Both the names Purakkudi and Purancheri mean one and the same thing in Tamil :—(Puram=outside; and Cheri or Kudi a suburban hamlet). In Manimekalai the central walled city was named as Idainilaivarappu (இடைநிலைவரப்பு) which in Tamil means the middle or central terraine. Vanchi is a general name of the whole city comprising all these three parts *viz.*, the harbour in the west, the fort in the centre and the outlying suburb in the east while each of these three parts had its own separate name. The harbour's name was Musiri, the walled city was known as 'Vanchimurram' or 'Vanchaikalam' and the suburb outside the eastgate was known as Kunavayil or Eastgate.

In ancient times great coastal cities appear to have been all planned on similar lines as, this Vanchi was. The great Chola metropolis 'Kavirippattinam' also known as "Puhar" was a great emporium at the mouth of the river Kaviri, driving a flourishing seaborne trade until it was submerged. That city comprised an eastern harbour known as 'Pattina-Pakkam', and the western inner city called 'Maruvur-Pakkam' with a long connecting avenue between them. This is the description of the maritime Chola city of "Puhar" in Kathai 5 of the epic, Chilappadikaram. The only topographical difference between these two maritime cities was that while Vanchi opened into her harbour in the west, Puhar faced eastward to her seafront. This was due solely to the

difference in their geographical situations, the Chera-capital lying on the Arabian sea, while the Chera city lay on the Bay of Bengal. In all other details the description of Puhar in Chilappadikaram Kathai 5 is almost identical with that of Vanchi in Manimekalai Kathais 28 and 29. Vanchimurram, the walled Chera city was called Karuvur in common parlance as distinct from the harbour Mahothai, just as the city proper of Puhar was called Maruvur as apart from her harbour known as Pattinappakkam. 'Karu' in Tamil means strong or great; Karuvur therefore signifies the strong citadel or the great fortified city. The walled portion of Vanchi was generally known as Vanchi-murram or Vanchaikalam; and the name Karuvur for it was almost unknown to the Tamil classics except for the solitary reference in Nakkirar's stanza in Agananuru already adverted to earlier in this enquiry.

That even Nakkirar's line refers only to the central city apart from the harbour or the beach, and not to the whole capital of the Cheras is clear from the very description of Nakkirar in this poem.

The relevant lines of this poem relied on by the Pandits to prove by the name Karuvur occurring therein that the Chera Capital was Karuvur near Trichinopoly run as follows:—

"..கோதை
திருமாவியனகர்க் கருவூர் முன்றுறைத்
தெண்ணீருயர் கரைக் குவைஇய
தண்ணான் பொருநை மணலினும் பலவே"

'May Kothai's (the Chera king's) life be as countless as the grains of sand heaps banking the river Porunai

where it forms the harbour in front of the great city of Karuvur.' Poet Nakkirar here speaks of the sand banks at the harbour mouth of the Porunai or Periyar in front of the walled city known in common parlance as Karuvur. The sands in the *munthurai* (முன்றுறை) of Karuvur, and not Karuvur itself form his theme. Munthurai means harbour in front (mun = in front, thurai = harbour). This harbour portion at the mouth of the river Porunai or Periyar is musiri known in later times as "Mahothai."

The poet here refers to the royal residence in the citadel or Karuvur appropriately as the city of Kothai, the dynastic title or surname of the Chera king, and wishes the Chera king as many days more to live as there were grains in the sand heaps in the river mouth in his city's harbour-front. Far from supporting the theory of the Pandits, these lines of Nakkirar negative their contention in as much as the city is said to stand on and face the mouth of the river Porunai *i.e.*, Karuvur = munthurai.

It is interesting in this connection to compare the following lines of poet Kundukatpaliyathar in a similar context :—

"............வஞ்சிப் புறம்திலைக்கும்........தண்ணான் பொருநை மணலினும் பலவே.

(*Puram 387*).

These lines when translated would read thus :— "May the Chera king have as numerous days of life as there were grains of sand in the river Porunai whose waters lave and lash the outer walls of Vanchi." These two references conclusively prove that the city of Vanchi known also as Karuvur stands at the mouth of the river

Porunai, and so close to its stream that its water breaks on the city's walls. Karur near Trichy is neither a marine nor even a riverine town.

The stream with its modern name of Amravathi is very many miles away from this inland Karur; and there is no evidence to connect it with the river Porunai or Periyar, which is ever closely associated with Vanchi in all the references from the old classics. Pandit M. Ragavayyangar ingeniously suggests that the river Amravathi, which once must have flowed by Karur, might have since shifted its course to over seven miles off that city. But all the other references to this inland Chola's Karur in the Thevarams of the 7th and 8th centuries, and in Periapuranam of the 12th century A. D. speak of it only as a town sans river, while all the references from the Tamil Literature uniformly and invariably refer to Vanchi or Karuvur, of the Cheras as a city on the 'Porunai'. 'Porunai' or Aan-Porunai, 'Periyar' or 'Perar', 'Kanchi', 'Chulli', 'Vanyar', are only several names of the great river in the Chera's Malainadu. This river takes its rise in the Western Ghats; but unlike all the great rivers in South India which flow eastward to the Bay of Bengal, the Chera River Periyar making its course westward empties itself into the Arabian Sea. All the ancient poets in their old classics speak of Vanchi as standing on the river Periyar or Porunai in such proximity as its waters have the city's outer walls (*Vide*. Verses of Ilaveyini, Puram 11) and of Kundukattu Paliyathan (Pusan 387), of Alathus Kilar (Puram 36), of Nakkirar (Agam 93) and of Ilango in his epic of Chilappathikaram. River Periyar was also called 'Aan Porunai', to distinguish it from another river Porunai in the Pandiyan kingdom.

Periyar or Perar means the great river; and this Periyar is expressly described by poet Paranar, in his Stanza 48 in the Vth canto of Pathirruppattu as rising in Chenguttuvan's own hills Ayirais a range in the Ghats, and as falling into his own Western Sea.

" நின் மலைப்பிறந்து நின் கடல் மண்டும் "

Musiri or Mahodai (now Alwaye) the port or harbour of Vanchi still stands at the mouth of Periyar. Karuvur near Trichinopoly neither now stands on, nor has ever been associated with any river in any of the old Tamil classics. All the Thevaram stanzas composed in the 7th and 8th centuries A. D. (known as Karuvur Anilai Pathikam) speak of this Karur as a riverless inland place. Sekkilar in his Periyapuranam composed in the 12th century refers to this Karuvur in several contexts, and yet never once speaks of it as being on or near by to any river. For, Karuvur really is not near any river at all. Amravathy is a petty tributary to the Kaviri and runs several miles away from Karuvur. This stream is dry for ten months in the year, and takes its rise in the Varahamalai on the east slope of the Ghats, whereas the river Periyar or Porunai, which is uniformly spoken of as washing, the walls of Vanchi, is, as its very name Periyar indicates, a great perennial river navigable to ships and sails from times of yore. Again, Periyar takes its rise from Ayiraimalai in the ghats, and empties into the western sea, And the river Periyar is expressly associated with all the great Chera kings eulogised by the several poets in the ten cantos of Pathirruppattu (*Vide* Stanzas Nos. 13—14—28, 43, 48, 86, 87, 88 of Pathirruppattu).

In the face of all these facts there can be no warrant to identify this great Chera river Porunai with the petty

tributary streams in the Cholanad, now known as Amravathy. Again, the names Amravathy and Suthanathi for this petty stream are derived from the mango groves through which it is fancifully described to flow. But the river Aan-Porunai owes its name to the fact that it swells in floods in the month of Ani (June—July) with the outbreak of the South West Monsoon, and has nothing whatever to do with Aan or cow whose fabled worship at a temple is said to have given the name "Aanilai" to this Karur according to its recent anonymous Thalapuranam. Thus from every point of view it is abundantly clear that the ancient Vanchi is not Karur near Trichinopoly, but is some town in the Malainad west of the Ghats, and standing on the great river Porunai or Periyar flowing into the Arabian Sea.

(5)

Karur near Trichinopoly is an inland town; it is over 350 miles east of the Arabian sea, and about 150 miles west of the Bay of Bengal. If this Karur were the old Vanchi, there can be no reference in literature at any time associating Vanchi with any beach or sea-front. But we find in fact many a passage in the Tamil Literature of all ages positively indicating that the ancient Chera city of Vanchi was a sea port.

(i) We have already seen how definitely the great Chola minister-poet Sekkilar in the 11th or the 12th century A. D. mentioned that Vanchi and Tiruvanchaikalam were the names of Kodungolur on the west coast. In stanza one in Cheraman Perumal Nayanar puranam he definitely says that (1) the hereditary royal residence of the Chera kings and site of the Saivite shrine were known as Thiruvanchaikalam (2) that it formed the landward or inner part of the town known in his (Sekkilar's) time as

Kodungolur, and (3) that this was the ancient dynastic capital of the Chera kingdom of Malainad.

" மாவீற்றிருந்த பெருஞ்சிறப்பின் மன்னுந்தோன்மை மலைநாட்டுப்
பாவீற்றிருந்த பல்புகழிற் பயிலுமியல்பிற் பழம்பதிதான்
சேவீற்றிருந்தார் திருவஞ்சைக்களமும் நிலவிச் சேரர்குலக்
கோவீற்றிருந்து முறைபுரியுங் குலக் கோமூதூர் கொடுங்கோளூர்.

(*Stz. 1. Cheraman Perumal Nayanar Puranam.*)

Sekkilar says in another context that king Cheraman Perumal had to touch the sea-waves on leaving his royal residence in the inner town of Vanchi before he set out to meet his friend, Saint Sundarar, in the eastern Cholanad.

(ii) We also adverted to the Thevara Padikam of Saint Sundarar of the 8th century A. D.; in which the last line of each of the ten verses definitely mentions that the town of Tiruvanchaikalam mistakenly pronounced as Tiru Anchaikkalam stood facing its harbour, Mahothai (old musiri), in the beach.

" கடலங்கரைமேல் மகோதை அணியார் பொழில் சூழ் அஞ்
சைக் களத்தப்பனே "

Vanchaikkalam, the inner town is here expressly said to be surrounded by the lovely groves of the harbour front Mahothai on the sea beach.

(iii) The Chera king Chenguttuvan's own brother, Ilango, in describing the pompous start of his royal brother and his forces on the north Indian expeditions in his famous epic Chilappadikaram says as follows :—

" ....வஞ்சி நீங்கித்
தண்டத் தலைவரும் தலைத்தார்ச் சேனையும்
வெண்டலைப் புணரியின் விளிம்புசூழ் போத,

மலை முதுகு நெளிய, நிலை நாடதர்பட,
உலக மன்னவன் ஒருங்குடன் சென்றாங்கு
ஆலும் புரவி அணித்தேர்த்தானையொடு
நீல கிரியின் நெடும் புறத்திறுத்தாங்கு"

(*ll.* 79-85. *Kathai*, 28)

The most significant fact here is that the vanguard, as it emerged out of the capital city of Vanchi is said to touch on the edge or fringe of its wing the white (foam) cressed sea-waves. This leaves no doubt whatever as to the proximity of the reach to the fort gate of the city of Vanchi. Pandit M. Raghava Iyengar in his biography of Cheran Chenguttuvan contends that his Vanchi was the inland Karur near Trichinopoly. It is of this very Chenguttuvan's and his army's march from the capital Vanchi that is described in the above quoted lines of that king's brother, Ilango, in Chilappadikaram which conclusively affirm that the city's gate abutted the breakers on the sea-beach. This epic poem of Ilango is of the first or of the second century A. D. at the latest.

(iv) And as if this were not enough, the author of Chilappadikaram reiterates the closest proximity or connection of the old Chera royal city of Vanchi to the sea coast in another context. In speaking of the triumphal return of his royal brother Chenguttuvan to his capital after his victorious north Indian expeditions, the poet refers with exquisite refinement and delicacy to the sorrowing queen of his brother, pining alone in her bed chamber with anguish for the long separation from her loving loved husband, in lines that are of perennial beauty and sweet pathos. Her drooping spirit is said to revive at listening from her bed in the royal chambers to the full-throated and joyous outbursts of cheering of the men and women of Vanchi at the approach of their

victorious king to his royal city.. In this connection it is expressly mentioned that women sporting under the Punnai trees and on sand heaps on the sea beach joined in the cheering reception to the king, and their shouts were also distinctly heard by the queen from her bed chamber in the palace. The following are the lines of Ilango in this context :—

“ குடதிசையாளுங் கொற்றவேந்தன்
வடதிசைத் தும்பை வாகையொடு முடித்துத்
தென்றிசைப் பெயர்ந்த வென்றித்தானையொடு
நிதிதுஞ்சு வியனகர் நீடுநிலை நிவந்து
....
பாட்டொடு தொடுத்துப் பல்யாண்டுவாழ்த்த,
....
தண்ணம் பொருநை யாடுநரிட்ட
வண்ணமுஞ் சுண்ணமு மலரும்பரந்து
விண்ணுறைவிற்போல் விளங்கிய பெருந்துறை
....
குறுகல் தாழைக் கோட்டுமிசையிருந்து
“ வில்லவன் வந்தான், வியன்பேரிமயத்துப்
பல்லா னிரையொடு படர்குவிர் நீர்” எனக்
காவல னானிரை நீர்த்துறை படீஇக்
கோவல ரூதுங் குழலின் பாணியும்
வெண்டிரைபொருத வேலை வாலுகத்துக்
குண்டுநீ ரடைகரைக் குவையிரும் புன்னை
வலம்புரி யீன்ற நலம்புரி முத்தம்
கழங்காடு மகளி ரோதை யாயத்து
வழங்குதொடி முன்கை மலர வேந்தி
‘ வானவன் வந்தான், வளரிளவனமுலை
தோணல முணீஇய தும்பை போந்தையொடு
வஞ்சி பாடுதும், மடவீர் யாமெனும்

அஞ்சொற்கிளவி யாந்தீம் பாணியும்
ஓர்த்துடனிருந்த கோப்பெருந்தேவி
வால்வளை செறிய, வலம்புரி வலனெழ
மாலைவெண் குடைக்கீழ் வாகைச் செவ்வியன் ;
வேக யானையின் மீமிசைப் பொலிந்து
குஞ்சர வொழுகையிற் கோனகரெதிர்கொள
வஞ்சியுட் புகுந்தனன் செங்குட்டுவனென."

The gist of these exquisite lines is this:—The victorious king, ruler of Kudathisai, *i.e.*, the Western regions, at the end of his successful campaign in the north, returned with his army southward. At their approach, people in different parts of his city, sighting his triumphal return, cheered him with shouts of greetings. The shepherds on the outskirts as they were driving their cattle homeward greeted the king and his army with the music of their tuneful flutes. At the sea-beach on sand heaps lashed by the white foamed waves, and under the Punnai trees were women sporting and amusing themselves; and when they saw the approach of the royal corte they all greeted the king in their sweet musical voice, and with songs in praise of his valour. The great queen was listening as she was, to all these sudden outbursts of cheerful greetings; and in her very joy, revived sufficiently in spirit and strength as almost to feel her bangles, which loosened during her pining months, now grip her wrist which seemed to swell and pulse with radiant buoyancy. And the king riding his royal elephant entered the city of Vanchi with conches blowing, and amidst cheers of all the citizens that crowded to offer him a rousing reception.

Thus here once more we have confirmation by king Chenguttuvan's brother, of his previous description of the

sea-front of the city of Vanchi at the triumphal re-entry of the royal corte, as at the auspicious starting of the army of expedition.

v. " கடலொலிகொண்டு செழுநகர் நடுவண் "—

In the heart of the opulent city with boisterous breakers roaring around (l. 12 of Stz. 21 of Pathirruppattu).

This line obviously refers to the capital of the Chera king, Palyanai chelkezhu Kuttuvan, the junior uncle of Chenguttuvan and the hero of canto 3 of Pathirruppattu.

vi. " கடலவுங் கல்லவும் யாற்றவும் பிறவும்
வளம்பல நிகழ்தரு நனந்தலை நன்னாட்டு
விழவறு பறியாமுழ விமிழ்மூதூர்."

(*ll. 16—18 of Stz. 15 of Pathirruppattu.*)

These lines refer to the ancient city of Imayavaramban, the hero of the second canto of Pathirruppattu. He is said to be the father of Chenguttuvan, and the ruler of Vanchi by Pandit Raghava Iyengar in his biography of Chenguttuvan. I maintain that Imayavaramban and his junior brother Palyanaichelkezhu Kuttuvan were maternal uncles to Chenguttuvan. Whether Imayavaramban was the father or uncle of Chenguttuvan will be discussed in part III of this thesis. But whatever their relationship may be, I agree with the Pandit that the capital of Imayavaramban and of Chenguttuvan was Vanchi. And these lines of Stanza 15 refer only to this Vanchi as all the ten Stanzas of the second canto *i.e.*, from Stanza 11 to Stanza 20, are only panegyrics of king Imayavaramban. And these lines unmistakably refer to the marine and commercial wealth of this ancient city of Vanchi.

vii. அளந்து கடையறியா அருங்கலஞ்சுமந்து
வளந்தலை மயங்கிய வஞ்சி முற்றத்து

(ll 33—34 of Katchi Kadai, Chilap.)

Here the Cheran Chenguttuvan's city is referred to as Vanchimurram. And it is described as "having a number of ships overlooking the city and laden with rich commodities of immeasurable value."

viii. In another context, this wealth of sea-borne-trade of Vanchi is again spoken of in Chilappadikaram as follows:—

"கடல் சேர் கானல் குடபுலத்தே"...............
..............................."வஞ்சியாம்
முழங்கு நீர்வேலி மூதூரில்
.........................இரங்கும்
பவ்வத்து நன்கல வெறுக்கை துஞ்சும்".

The gist of the lines is this:—"The old city of Vanchi has a noisy sea-bourn, in the Kudapulam or western region abutting stones-ridden seacoast; and in the wailing sea abutting the city wealth-laden ships would be riding at anchor."

Many more references may be quoted. But they would be superfluous in view of the fact that the extracts cited above definitely and decisively set this question at rest, and establish that the ancient Chera capital "Vanchi" was actually abutting the Arabian Sea. And on all the evidences discussed in this part of the thesis, it would now be abundantly clear that the Tamil classics give us convincing proofs for positive conclusions as to the identity of the old Chera kingdom and its ancient capital Vanchi. We found we have incontrovertible

evidences and irrefutable proofs to show that the ancient Chera kingdom was only " Malainad " in the Kudapulam *i.e.*, the territories between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, and that it did not comprise any part of the regions of Kongunad east of the ghats. We also found enough materials to conclude that the ancient Chera capital Vanchi could not be the inland Karur near Trichinopoly, but must be the famous coastal city at the mouth of the Periyar or Porunai, with a natural harbour; and the harbour was known as Musiri in times of yore, and as Mahodai in later periods. Whereas the inner city with the royal quarters, bazaars and fort was known as Vanchimurram in the classic age, and Thiruvanjaikkalam in later times. The modern name of this old city is Kodungolur or Cranganore.

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ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	Error.		Correction.
4	19	வன்புகழ்	...	வண்புகழ்.
26	22	வெளியந்தித்தன்	...	வெளியன்தித்தன்.
29	7	no little	...	not a little.
47	20	Discussive	...	Discursive.
73	22	130	...	200.
78	5	contest	...	Context.
78	31	150	...	250.
80	...	அந்தரமாளு	...	அந்தரமாறு
84	...	Idainelai	...	Idainilai.
87	1	of	...	or
87	14	because	...	became.
90	5	reasoned	...	recent.
91	14	....	...	(ii)
91	26	முன்னுறை	...	முன்றுறை
92	6	Definitely	...	occasionally.
92	11	Karuvur or district	...	Kurram or district.
95	6	terram	...	terraine
100	19	miles	...	furlongs
101	last line	....	...	"Vanchi Aganagar or" (To be added at the end.)
103	10	reach	...	beach.
103	13	of	...	To omit 'of' between 'is' and 'this.'
107	16	old	...	ancient.
107	18	stones-ridden	...	groves ridden

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